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THE SPY IN EARLY AMERICA: THE EMERGENCE OF A GENRE

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THESIS

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THE SPY IN EARLY AMERICA: THE EMERGENCE OF A GENRE

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This dissertation investigates the very beginnings of spy fiction in the United States by examining the large body of literature about spies during the Revolution which appeared from shortly after the Revolution through the antebellum period. By examining the paradoxical figure of the heroic spy, the dissertation explores how the spy story emerged as the adventure tale of the Revolution, the spy became a potential hero, and how the spy embodied many of the concerns of the new nation of the United States. The dissertation first explores the many plays, poems, and stories told about the men, British Major John André and the American Captain Nathan Hale, whose stories transformed the spy from a furtive, disreputable peddler of information into potential heroes. The study moves from history into fiction as it next examines James Fenimore Cooper's 1821 novel, *The Spy*, as the first American spy novel and its legacy to other American spy fiction from the early nineteenth century into the twentieth century. Moving from the establishment of "spy fiction," the study then demonstrates how tropes of spy fiction influenced and were influenced by the memoirs of Revolutionary War spies, and how one memoir inspired the first cynical American spy novel, Herman Melville's *Israel Potter*. The gender issues of the antebellum period are explored through the spy fiction written by women and the female characters of spy fiction by both genders.

The theory of most analyses of "spy fiction" presumes that it emerged as a colonizing literature of the waning days of the British empire. This study, reading spy literature as a much earlier genre, examines American spy fiction as a genre which is both postcolonial and colonizing, reflecting the United States' quirky position as a former colony which began colonizing others even before it won its independence. Anxieties regarding the new social mobility, the freedom of the individual within society, and the increasing centralization of the government are among the many issues American spy fiction addressed through the liminal and paradoxical figure of the heroic spy.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The history of the American spy story reaches nearly as long as that of the United States, and reflects many of the same contradictions that have shaped the national character of the United States: a former colony that became an emergent empire with its independence; a society of citizen-soldiers who distrust the military and who seek out new territory in the name of defending their homes; a democracy of individuals who distrust the official government's limits of individual rights, but also distrust the decision-making capabilities of democratic mobs; a society which encouraged honesty in its leaders, yet admired the audacity and wit of confidence men. Yet it is a history often neglected, as few recognize the American spy story's early beginnings or its impact on our cultural conception of the nation's birth and the individual's relationship to the "American experiment." Despite the spy's seeming incompatibility with an open democracy (relying as he or she does on deception, trickery and lying), the spy became a fixture in American literature. I hope to explore how the spy came to become a prominent, if not always heroic, figure in American literature, how such a figure personified many of the early political and social anxieties about the new nation, and how he (and, rarely, she) came to represent the ambitious and ambivalent expansionist principles of the country.

Spy stories have received growing attention from literary critics, partially as a result of the current critical fascination with popular culture. MLA listings from 1980 through 1998 reveal 175 articles dealing with spy stories. A few are about James Fenimore Cooper's 1821 novel *The Spy* and the children's classic, *Harriet the Spy*, but most are about modern spy novels, the kind read on beaches and in airports. Although some of these articles appear in journals intended for thriller fans, like *The Armchair Detective* or *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, the vast majority appear in academic journals. Quite a few novelists better known for producing more "serious" literature—Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, and Graham Greene—wrote spy novels, but most of the authors studied are best-known for writing spy novels, like Ian Fleming and John Buchan. Not only is popular espionage literature now considered appropriate for rigorous academic study, spy novelists themselves are deemed legitimate academic topics. David Cornwell, who writes under the name "John Le Carré," is the subject of at least three full-length books, including a volume in the Harold

Bloom edited series, *Modern Critical Views* whose other subjects includes James Joyce, Bertolt Brecht, and Leo Tolstoy. In addition to Bloom, lately noted for his adherence to the notion of a “Western Canon,” Umberto Eco considers Ian Fleming’s creation of a Bond semiotics, and Michel Denning uses Marxist literary theory to evaluate the “heroism of consumption” in Fleming’s novels. While spy novels do not threaten to overtake the most canonical of works as academic subjects, literary scholars’ current interest in popular culture does enable the creative extension of the literary canon and critical indulgence in pleasure reading under the guise of “research.”

Nevertheless, a residual New Critical snobbery attached to the study of spy literature manifests itself by privileging the British emissaries of a postimperialist perspective of international affairs, along with the virtual exclusion of American spy novels. Aside from Tom Clancy, no American is the subject of a book length study or collection of essays, and the book on Clancy, in the *Critical Companion to Popular Contemporary Writers Series*, is intended for “the general reading public,” high school students, and “fans” (x). William F. Buckley, Jr. is the subject of just two scholarly articles; Robert Ludlum is mentioned in passing in an additional two. E. Howard Hunt is the only American in Anthony Masters’s *Literary Agents: The Novelist as Spy*, a study of former intelligence agents who turned novelists. One could argue that Le Carré’s character-driven narratives are more receptive to conventional literary analysis than Tom Clancy’s technology-driven stories and consequently may accord greater aesthetic fulfillment to literary professionals who read Henry James. I will not take up the thorny issue of “literary merit” in this study, but posit instead that we should consider American spy literature on its own terms, for it emerged from different historical circumstances and reflects a different world view from British spy novels.

Most histories of the spy story describe it as an English invention that arose out of late nineteenth-century anxieties about British imperialism and the burdens of governing such a large portion of the globe while maintaining the increasingly fragile “balance of power” in Europe. Despite this nearly universally accepted account of the spy novel’s origins,¹ a much earlier “first” spy novel—James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Spy*—does not fit this origin and, if noted, is usually finessed by critics as an aberration. Some critics

acknowledge *The Spy* as a promising start to espionage literature that never led anywhere in American letters. Michael Cox, for example, in his introduction to *The Oxford Book of Spy Stories* (1996) writes:

Crude in many ways, Cooper's novel was none the less one of the first attempts to analyse the professional exercise of duplicity during a time when national loyalties were fiercely, often tragically, divided. Despite a general feeling that American democratic culture was antithetical to the kinds of covert activity sponsored by old European powers (a feeling which persisted well into the twentieth-century), *The Spy* spawned a host of story-paper and dime novel imitations. *It was, however, in the corrupt Old World—in imperial Britain—that spy fiction proper had its genesis, and to a large extent, it has remained a peculiarly British tradition.* (xiii, emphasis added)

Cox's assessment is one of the more positive acknowledgements of an American contribution to spy fiction. But even Cox considers most American spy fiction a pale imitation of its British counterpart and generally not "worthy of the name" (Cox xiii). Cox additionally notes that "despite strenuous attempts, it has proved difficult to increase the representation of American writers of espionage fiction" (xvii), without also mentioning that the first story he includes is by the American Ambrose Bierce, written well before the earliest British novel he mentions. Cox is not alone in his dismissal of American spy stories. By and large American efforts are not merely discounted but ignored because theories developed by examining British spy fiction do not match the historical reality of American spy fiction. British spy fiction, developed during the collapse of what had been the most powerful empire in the world, presumes a world-weariness and cynicism about international relations. The British legacy of clandestine alliances between noble houses, complicated rules governing Parliamentary deal-making, and the intricacies of an ancient constitutional monarchy presupposes that decisions are made within intricate secret governmental webs of power and influence. In contrast, America's relatively youthful government and optimistic formulations about the openness of the democratic republican system would seem to banish the necessary distrust from Americans' perceptions of their government. In addition, America's superpower status and continuing international influence run contrary to the disillusionment with imperialist systems which results when the empire has failed. Read as a

postimperialist genre, spy fiction can only emanate from a failed empire and the wisdom regarding the fickleness of international relationships which results. Americans, in contrast, have occasionally appeared naïve in their presumptions that the world will operate according to their national interest. In 1929, the United States Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, famously rejected the notion of intelligence gathering with the disdainful statement: "Gentlemen do not read other gentlemen's mail" (qtd. in Stone ix), a statement often cited by those who claim that Americans have been neophytes in the realm of espionage for most of their history, and thus remain incapable of writing a decent spy story. Watergate and Vietnam, the theory goes, were steps in the right direction, but not enough to give the American cowboy the proper deference to international intrigue.

Both in his collaboration with John Cawelti in *The Spy Story* and his more recent book, *The Neutral Ground*, Bruce Rosenberg has attempted to link Cooper's effort with the work of the forefathers of the modern British spy novel, such as Buchan and Graham Greene, while acknowledging that recent authors such as John LeCarré and Ian Fleming in all likelihood did not read Cooper (*Neutral Ground* 83). While a noble effort to grant American espionage fiction its due respect, the effort appears misplaced. Modern American espionage literature derives from a different political dynamic from British spy literature and is informed by old American traditions which predate those of British spy literature. Unlike British spy fiction, which evolved in the waning of the British empire, American spy stories emerged as America was developing a national identity. In the history of American literature, Cooper's *The Spy* was not merely the first spy novel but, to many critics, one of the first American novels to deal with American history and themes. Although both forms evolved as a result of an "end of empire," for America, the "end of empire" meant developing a postcolonial identity apart from Britain.

American Spy Fiction: Imperial Literature for a Postcolonial Nation

Although, like British spy literature, American spy literature is rooted in concerns about nationalism, international influence, and empire, America's relationship to imperialism is much murkier than Britain's, and its early prominence as an imperial power arose closely on the heels of its emergence from the imperial

influence of Britain. The United States often does not think of itself as an empire. Discussion of American international influence must reassess our assumptions of what "empire" means as terms like "neo-colonialism," "influence," and "geo-economy" redefine international relationships. Unlike the clear diminishment of British international influence as one by one the colonies declared their independence, America's international influence has not unarguably declined; indeed there is much to suggest that as the sole remaining "superpower," the United States now enjoys unprecedented international influence. Current U.S. intelligence assessments of international relations do not identify any "peer competitors" in the international scene, only "near peers" and several "rogue states."²

Given the string of increasing international influence in the United States' history, it is little wonder that American spy literature is rarely marked by the cynicism characteristic of British spy literature. Authors may experience pangs of conscience over the My Lai Massacre, American Indian genocide, the territory grabbing Mexican and Spanish-American wars, the questionable justification of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Bay of Pigs fiasco, American involvement in Korea and Vietnam, and the unsavory international characters the CIA has retained on its payroll; yet the continued advancement of American national interests coupled with national self-imagining as an isolationist and reluctant player in international events has rarely caused twentieth-century American spy authors to question the results of such activities. That current American spy literature tends toward apology rather than outrage for American atrocities stems from the first basic assumption necessary for all spy literature writers: to write about spying, one must believe that spying is a legitimate activity. Since the deception and secrecy that accompany spying seem, at least at first glance, antithetical to American ideals of a democratic government, honest citizenry, and an open society, it is worth exploring the justifications for spying which date back to the earliest spy literature appearing shortly after the Revolution. Historically considered a dubious profession, spying depends both on qualities which Americans embrace as the national character, and on those which seem antithetical to the country's idealized self-image. On the one hand, a spy should be clever, independent, and able to survive by his or her wits alone, all traits of the rugged American individualist, a character already mythologized by the time of the Revolution and reinforced by experience of settling the ever-expanding frontier during the first

half of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the spy must rely on deception, an anathema to those who would define the American character as open and truthful. Our judicial system is built upon telling "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" and we remember our national heroes as honest, as in "Honest Abe" Lincoln. One of the most remembered anecdotes in Mason Locke Weems' biography of George Washington is that young George confessed when his father asked who cut down the cherry tree: "I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet" (10). (Ironically, George Washington was not only father of our country but also father of American military intelligence and our first spy master.) But what makes for sound domestic policy may not make for sound international policy. As long as the geopolitical system is based on separate nations jockeying for international resources such as energy, food, and money, there will be wars, threats of wars, and national secrets. Spying is a necessary activity in the successful prosecution of a war. Information, as any military strategist will avow, is key to understanding how best to attack or defend against an enemy. Knowledge of a hidden weakness or strength can make or break a battle. For this reason, countries guard their military secrets and their means for uncovering others' military secrets carefully, and those caught discovering these secrets are punished severely.

Despite this necessity, the spy in America has had a problem with being perceived as honorable because of his reliance on dishonorable skills. However, the clever rogue has a long history in American literature and at his best, the successful spy can incorporate some of the more disarming aspects of the witty and ingenious confidence man. Gary Lindberg, in his analysis of the confidence man in American literature, dubs the confidence man the national "covert hero" (3). Literary personifications of confidence men abound in our cultural iconography. Mark Twain's junior confidence man, Tom Sawyer, part juvenile delinquent and part businessman-in-training, remains prominent as a national childhood hero even as Twain's novel about his more conscience-ridden friend, Huckleberry Finn (a con man himself, although less callous than Tom), has come under attack as unsuitable for high school reading. *The Confidence Man*, Melville's examination of the confidence men of the *Fidèle*, exposes the moral bankruptcy of confidence men and those they con, but even in this work critical of nineteenth-century America as a society of confidence artists,

Melville revels in the comedy and indulges in multiple cons himself. Often the literary confidence man combines comic, trickster, ingenious entrepreneur, and occasionally agent of social retribution since literary victims of con games often deserve what they get. The spy can incorporate many of these attributes and enhance them with a noble motive. Rather than engaging in questionable activities for the purpose of enriching himself, the spy acts to further the cause of the American army. Although history abounds with spies who engage in espionage for personal enrichment, the American literary spy rarely does (only the villains do). Wit rather than avarice ties the spy to the confidence man. The corresponding activities of cloaking of purpose, outright disguise, and "Yankee tricks," are particularly American traits of successful literary spies.

The similarities between the confidence man and the spy permit similar examinations of trust. The circumstances of the new nation arising in the industrial age, with its class mobility and constant migration, dissolved communal bands of trust as one could rarely be sure of who one's neighbors were in the constant flux of people into urban areas and created a larger gulf between the public space of strangers and the private space of trusted family and friends. The spy is a liminal figure, operating at the junctions of public, private, and political spheres, and of enemy and friend, often in a "neutral ground." Spying relies upon either discovering secrets or convincing those who know the secrets into telling them to the spy. For a nation concerned with questions of how open an open government should be, the spy provides a dilemma. By its nature as a secret activity, spying has no place in a open democracy; yet few would dispute that as long as nations war or seek to gain power and influence over one another for national gain, spying is a necessary military operation and foreign policy tool.

In an open democracy, spying is best understood as a military necessity during wartime. As J. J. Macintosh notes, "in times of peace, at least—spying is normally taken to be dishonorable" (165). The qualification, "in times of peace," is a crucial point to understanding early American spy stories. Like the army, spy networks were originally most prominent during war. War, especially a war deemed justifiable as the only method available for prosecution of the national interests, legitimates a great many activities condemned in peacetime: homicide, pillaging, and spying. War turns everything upside down. Even

military structure and discipline run counter to democratic principles. The strict rank structure and class division between officers and enlisted personnel, the necessity of chains of command, and the lack of democratic input in decisions which mark military discipline clash with the ideals of democracy. As a result of this clash, as well as the abuses, real and imagined, colonists suffered at the hands of the occupying British army, Americans have a long history of ambivalence about the military. The nation emerged as a result of a protracted war of attrition with what had been one of the finest armies of Europe. The citizen-soldier remains a national ideal as the pattern of generational wars and the draft has meant, until recently, that a significant portion of the male populace has served in the military.³ Yet, standing armies have been historically distrusted in America, and early gestures toward a standing army after the Revolution met with fierce resistance. Every war in our nation's history has been followed by a dramatic decrease in military spending, including the relatively bloodless "Cold War" which was less actual warfare than diplomatic strategy enacted through military threats.

What makes this ambivalence even more puzzling is how much our history is punctuated by war. Since the French and Indian War, the American colonies and the United States have engaged in at least one major military conflict every generation, along with numerous isolated military operations. Although the results of these wars have ranged from national independence, territorial expansion, increased international prestige, thwarting opposing theories of government in other countries, and secured access to energy, all have been justified as necessary for the protection of national interest rather than as furtherance of national influence. Following these wars with military drawdowns enhances the national self-image as an isolationist nation dragged reluctantly into protecting international human rights, the geo-economy, and democratic principles world-wide. American imperialist policy is defined in terms of defensive war. The National Security Act of 1947 not only created the CIA and the Air Force, it also renamed the War Department of World War II, "the Department of Defense." Yet the United States' declarations of defensive wars date back to our "defensive" wars against Native Americans who attacked the Anglo forts which encroached upon their land and rights, and our "defense" of the Western Hemisphere through the Monroe Doctrine. Even domestic policy is laden with defensive martial rhetoric. National problems are depicted as enemies against

which we must protect the citizenry. The War on Poverty, and the War on Drugs are only two of the domestic "wars" various presidential administrations have waged. Apart from governmental politics, we wage "battles of the sexes" and "culture wars," and compare post-riot South Central Los Angeles to war-ravaged Beirut. The lines between rhetoric and policy become more murky as military aircraft are employed in tracking drug planes and national guardsmen are used to enforce civil rights or quell civil protests. The national penchant for defining foreign and domestic policy as war only further confuses our national relationship to the military and provides grist for the spy novelist's mill as more military operations provide more opportunity for heroic spy activity.

The American spy, figured as a defender of national interest rather than an intrepid explorer, is automatically associated with the domestic realm even as he dabbles in the political sphere. Additionally, the American spy tends to be a family man or a family man in the making. The new nation, occupying much of a large continent, needed large families to settle the land; the American hero tends to embrace those family values, identifying even more closely to the domestic realm. The family becomes an extended metaphor for the nation, and the American spy, as the defender of his family, defends national interests and thus the homeland, no matter how far he must venture to protect the homeland. Since the spy was a military necessity, the spy in American literature tends to be a professional employed in the defense of the nation, who connects his desire to protect home with a professional duty not easily abandoned by those with American work ethics. Although he may not be a field agent by training, the American spy is one of the citizen-soldiers who recognizes that spying is a necessary action to protect against the identified threat.

The American spy, being in the defensive posture, is a potential victim. Thus it is not surprising that the captivity narrative, the American narrative form which sprang from the Anglo captives of Native Americans, is a central part of the American spy adventure. Captivity narratives stem from a colonizing situation, in that the reason the captive is present to be abducted results from the captive's participation in the seizure and settlement of Native American land. The narrative then presents the captive as the innocent and the captors as the injuring party, thus justifying, as a defensive move, further colonial action by removing or neutralizing the Native American presence. When the Native Americans are replaced by the British as in the

early spy novels, the narrative takes on postcolonial dimensions as the new nation rids itself of the oppressive former government. The other early victim narrative, the seduction tale, also provided a loose model for the spy narrative as the spy is seduced into betraying his military honor for the promise of glory or riches.

“Seduction” and “honor” in this case are highly dependent on who is seducing whom. Both forms of the spy plot depict the public and political spheres of the spy story as male-dominated spheres. Both, classically centered around a feminine victim, replace her with a male would-be victim who, more often than not, surmounts the obstacles presented by captors or those who would compromise his honor to become a hero who protects America, often on the “open field of battle.” Both spy versions derive from the less happy stories of the first two historic spies who captured the American imagination: the American Captain Nathan Hale, and the British Major John André, the subjects of the first chapter of this study. Although few of the literary spies in this study are convicted and executed, as Hale and André were, the two, despite their different nationalities, color the presentation of spies in antebellum literature, and all American spy literature to some extent. While few spies are victimized in the same way, the potential for a spy becoming a martyr to the cause is not only a key component to the suspense of a spy story, it also justifies the continued presentation of American military operations (and in this literature, all foreign diplomacy is a potential military operation) as defensive. It is this defensive posture which makes the United States’ brand of imperialism so difficult to pin down, and which ties American colonialism to its earliest postcolonial roots.

Colonialism and postcolonialism have been applied to rather creative notions of what constitutes a colony. Certainly (post)colonial theory has illuminated many texts and greatly enhanced our understanding of the complex relationships that fall under the rubric “nationalism.” Still it is difficult to identify a unifying theory. The one constant seems to be that every colonial and postcolonial experience is different. Although some aspects of one colonial situation may parallel another, one cannot make blanket statements about India’s struggle for nationalism based on Ireland’s experience, nor can one necessarily compare the racial tensions existing in South Africa with those of Vietnam. The United States, which Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back* call a “settler” culture along with Australia and New Zealand (133-145), is even more divergent from a central postcolonial theory than generally accepted examples of “postcolonial”

nations. I will not attempt to apply "postcolonial" theory as advocated by Lawrence Buell without careful qualification. Buell identifies five "postcolonial" properties of American literature during the first few decades of the nineteenth century: "the semi-Americanization of the language;" "the issue of cultural hybridization;" "the expectation that artists be responsible agents for achieving national liberation;" "the problem of alien genres;" and "new world pastoral" ("Postcolonial" 427-30). Although Buell admits that the American postcolonial experience differed considerably from that of India in that the American colonies never suffered "anything like the political/military domination colonial India did" (415), his continual equation of American and Indian examples of these properties overstates the similarities between the two cultures' postcolonial emergence.

On the other hand, I do not fully concur with Amy Kaplan's dismissal of Buell (17), which stems from her astute analysis that American history is marked from the very beginning as a colonizing activity of the continent and the indigenous people inhabiting it by white European settlers. Kaplan's analysis does not address the colonization of those settlers by an absent government who saw the colonists as sources of economic gain rather than citizens. While one cannot compare the quality of oppression of the white settlers by the British government to the quality of oppression of the Native Americans or of the forcibly imported African Americans by the settlers, on some levels one could compare the Anglo-Americans to the Anglo-Irish and their similar battles for Home Rule. Although we may question the "authenticity" of their colonial experience (provided we presume that *there is* an authentic colonial experience), we cannot doubt that the colonists felt oppressed enough to rebel and fight an eight-year long war to end their formal connection to Great Britain. Edward Watts, in theorizing the "decolonization" of the American colonies proposes using Alan Lawson's "Second World" model (which Lawson uses to describe former British colonies in Australia, New Zealand and Canada) (Watts 9) in order to avoid the many difficulties of applying to United States the postcolonial theories developed from the postcolonial experience in Southwest Asia or Africa. As Watts notes, such a model recognizes the kinship between the dominant Anglo American nation and the British government, yet preserves the distance and isolation of the Americans from British culture. Watts also notes that Patrick Henry, in early discussion of the new shape of the American government, drew parallels between

republicanism and imperialism (2-3), beginning, as early as 1763, America's schizophrenic position on the colonial/colonizing spectrum as an emergent empire that began as a postcolonial nation.

This bipolar position with respect to colonial politics reveals itself in spy literature. Spy literature began inadvertently as one response to the many calls for an American literature throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps one reason the call continued decades after the nation was established as such was the combination of the huge cultural debt (and postcolonial inferiority complex) Americans felt to Britain and the difficulty of uniting so many disparate populations who self-identified by ethnicity, region, religion, and race. Many authors chose to simplify such complexity by ignoring all other groups. Early American spy literature reflects many of the paradoxes of the nation's formation and its division of the world into "US" and "them." Spy literature originated in this struggle for a national identity apart from Great Britain, and the anxiety regarding how this seeming political revolution had not only overturned a political system but also an entire social system. In the ways that spy literature probes the differences between Americans and the British and attempts to define "Americanness," it is a postcolonial literature.

Of course, there is the troubling aspect of America's position as a colonizer even before the colonists dumped tea or signed the Declaration of Independence. Certainly as Kaplan argues, and as Priscilla Wald argues in *Constituting America*, American nation building, the constitution of "We the People," was as expansionist as it was nationalist, redefining the national identity along with the political boundaries as the frontier continued to expand. It was also exclusionary as it sought to create a unifying national identity, but in doing so, created strata of citizenship and identified some people as "more equal than others." While all nations emerging from another country's rule need to establish themselves as capable of running the country without benefit of the colonial government, in the case of the United States, that meant running a loose confederation of independently founded colonies, continuing a policy of colonization over the Native Americans and African American slaves, and expanding the Anglo-American settlements further into the continent, often with much greater vigor than the British had. In its presentation of white American men as innately superior to those of other races, and even in its adherence to what Ashis Nandy calls "hyper-masculinity," American spy literature is colonizing literature. As one might expect of a new, unstable nation,

many of our early wars were civil wars to some extent, and thus spies were often more concerned with domestic enemies than foreign. Less notable in the early fiction than in the memoirs written by early military spies and soldiers, the Revolutionary soldiers battled not only British soldiers and American Tories, but also Native Americans whom the British recruited with the argument that it would be in the Native Americans' best interests to defeat the settlers. Although most American Indians remained neutral, those who fought against the settlers presented a public relations disaster for future white Americans' depiction of the nation's forefathers as the best of the spiritual blend between English civility and the "children of nature" and "noble savages" who figured so prominently in the literature of the early nineteenth-century. African Americans also presented a problem in discussions of the Revolution as a war to release the settlers from "slavery" to Britain, since it did not, quite purposely, result in similar freedoms for African Americans. That Britain granted emancipation to its black slaves in 1807 did not help the American self-presentation as the nation of freedom. As a result, in the early spy novels, race discussions rarely reflect reality, and often the Revolution is portrayed as a conflict between white men. By and large, works written before the 1840s by men, concerned with establishing a separate American nation, tend to mute racial difference as they seek to erase the colonizing differences used by the British to justify British rule over the Americans. Later works, coming from a place of established national identity, yet greater racial tension, may assert racial differences at play more strenuously, yet present a white domestic colonization of darker peoples. These later works feature more non-white characters, who appear as either easily subdued villains or loyal servants. Because so much of American spy literature depends upon the negotiation of state secrets and the interaction of political entities, spy literature often depicts the author's vision of power relations within the nation, as well as international power relations. Indeed, the domestic power structure takes precedent since the international conflict serves to illustrate the nation's ability to withstand assaults on its sovereignty. Spy stories written by women, reflecting women's very different relationship to political power, depict very different power relations within the nation, and the negotiation of power outside the formal political sphere between not only women and men, but also whites and non-whites..

In addition to America's domestically based imperialism, and its attitudes toward race, America's notion of class structure also distinguishes American spy fiction from British. If one takes John Buchan's character Richard Hannay as a model heroic spy, as many critics have, one will note that the British heroic spy tends to be upper class, with a considerable amount of time and money at his disposal in the pursuit of information or bad guys. Even the professional agents, like James Bond and LeCarré's Smiley, are sophisticated, well-traveled, and if not actually upper class, know how to "pass" as such; they feel comfortable in the presence of influence and luxury. In contrast, American heroic spies tend to be decidedly middle-class, although in the early literature, as the spy was emerging as potential hero and the middle class was emerging as the predominant socio-economic class, class can vary widely. Cooper's Harvey Birch, a working-class peddler who, it is hinted, is somewhat superior to his economic fellows, reveals Cooper's unease with making a spy a hero. Sidekick spies, like John Pendleton Kennedy's Horseshoe Robinson, tend, like Birch, to act as working-class servants to higher-born heroes. Often, if an upper-class hero is tasked to spy, he will attempt nobly but will ultimately reveal his inability for such questionable activity by being captured. Once the truly heroic spy emerged, like Catharine Sedgwick's Eliot Lee of *The Linwoods*, he was clearly identified as a member of the vast and industrious American middle-class. The trend continues to this day. For example, when Robert Ludlum's Jason Bourne, of the Bourne trilogy, recognizes through an amnesiac fog that he can identify the finer things in life (from years as an international spy), he is relieved to find that he is not comfortable around them. Indeed, *The Bourne Identity* abounds with signals that Bourne is just an average American Joe with certain peculiar talents. Jack Ryan, the protagonist of several of Tom Clancy's novels, comes from comfortable but humble beginnings, and secures his middle-class economic status for life as a modestly-paid government bureaucrat. Both Ryan and Bourne hail from a long tradition of American celebration of humble beginnings and its concurrent celebration of a natural meritocracy which will allow those with talents to rise above those beginnings.

Definitions

Although many of these observations apply to the larger body of American spy fiction, I will limit my examination to antebellum literature. I do so for many reasons. One is the sheer volume of material. Despite many critics' opinions to the contrary, there was a great deal of spy literary material produced in this country prior to 1900. After the Civil War, greater literacy, advances in publishing, and the personal connection many felt to the Civil War, as well as the personal involvement of many citizens as spies during that war, combined to create a vast collection of Civil War spy literature, and a concurrent revival in interest in spy stories set during the Revolution. Since my intention is to document the beginnings of a genre, rather than chronicle an entire century's worth of spy literature, I found that limiting myself to material published before 1860 still allowed me to examine a large assortment of texts. I will occasionally refer to later works, usually those published in the late twentieth-century, but this reference will be for purposes of illustrating a trend still current in American spy fiction rather than discussing the entire body of American spy literature.

I also limit this study to material written about spies during the Revolution. I do so partly because I am interested in the origins of spy literature and how those origins derive from national originary myths. Long before the United States was a "superpower," indeed before the United States had much in the way of collective national identity, the national ambivalence regarding our martial origins, our democratic ideals, and our republican desires found expression in the earliest spy literature. The spy became one site of the national debate of what honor and patriotism meant in a nation freed of a formal aristocracy and how one translated the necessary evils of war into a civil society. The Revolution also serves as the backdrop for more antebellum spy literature than any other action, military or diplomatic.

Although limiting the study to a war may appear to make my assumption that American spy literature is martially oriented a self-fulfilling prophesy, my research into other spy titles about actions aside from the Revolution revealed no American spy literature prior to 1900 about anything other than war. Although we know that there were many diplomatic missions prior to the Civil War, these were not presented as spy missions. The tension between Barbary pirates seizing American ships was portrayed from the viewpoint of the captives, as in Susanna Rowson's *The Slaves of Algiers* (1794) and Royall Tyler's *The*

Algerine Captive (1797), not the diplomats. The Monroe Doctrine is not featured in any spy novel, although it was one of the most significant diplomatic policies of the antebellum period, nor is Jefferson's real estate coup, the Louisiana Purchase.

Even with these limitations, I break new ground in an area that has not been much investigated. With the exceptions of Christine Bold's essay, "Secret Negotiations: The Spy Figure in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Fiction," which advocates study of the cheaply produced spy novels and story papers of the 1840s, and Stephen Graff's Ph.D. 1976 dissertation, *The Evolution of the American Military Spy Play from the Beginning to 1900*, which chronicles the large number of military spy plays on the American stage and their evolution from examinations of the new social order to conventional melodrama, this study is the only study to claim an early and continued American tradition of spy literature, and is the only one to look at the evolution of the spy story through the genres of drama, fiction, memoir, poetry and ballad. Bold's essay outlines a plan of attack for assessing the marketing of the popular spy novel, much in line with her study of the western, *Selling the Wild West*. Although I agree that such an assessment of the cultural work of the spy novel would be valuable, my study does not do that. Bruce Rosenberg's study of the connection between Cooper's novel *The Spy* and the André/Arnold incident looks at the relation between history and fiction in the early development of spy literature, but in a limited manner. I hope to expand that study and our understanding of the American spy novel as a reflection of historical understanding of the nation. Cawelti and Rosenberg's deconstruction of the spy story has provided me some terms for understanding the spy story, which I will identify as they appear, and Bruce Merry's *Anatomy of the Spy Thriller* has provided me a basis for understanding trends in British spy literature which generally confirms conclusions I have formed from my own reading of British spy literature. My knowledge of the intelligence community comes from a vague collection of professional readings, conversations with intelligence officers, and experiences gathered during twelve years of service in the United States Air Force. All can be confirmed in the open literature and unless documented, I have treated such as general knowledge. Since my focus is on literary depiction of spies, rather than how the literary diverges from or confirms reality, this knowledge will rarely appear,

although my years of reading Tom Clancy's novels in airports may be indirectly attributable to this experience.

Before I begin, I would like to define some terms. Eric Ambler has defined a spy story as "a story in which the central character is a secret intelligence agent of one sort or another" although he acknowledges that this definition does not include many of the "spy stories" he himself has written (21). I will expand this definition slightly to "a story involving a major character who is involved in the gathering of secret information about one entity for another entity, or in the passing of such information." Sometimes the story will chronicle the passing or gathering of information; sometimes it will be about someone employed in passing or gathering information. That person will be called "the spy."

Several other terms often are bandied about during discussions of information exchanges. I will define "traitor" as one employed by the government who willingly gives information to the enemy or seeks to undermine the national interest. A "spy master" is one who directs the activities of the spy by giving assignments. A "double agent" provides information to both sides, generally while in the overt employment of one of the governments. A "mole" is a highly placed official in one government who provides information to another. Since media reports about people like Aldrich Ames lump all who exchange covert information under the general rubric "spy," I will clarify my definitions with examples. Ames, as a CIA employee, was a *spy* who, in selling information to the Soviet Union, became a *traitor* and, by serving two governments at once, a *double agent*. Benedict Arnold, who planned to deliver West Point to the British, was a *traitor*. Nathan Hale, gathering information on the British while an American officer disguised as a schoolmaster, was a *spy*. Benjamin Church, the American hospital-general who supplied information to the British, was a *traitor* who, because of his high placement within the fledging government and the length of time during which he passed information to the British government, could be called a *mole* as well. Occasionally, spies, in order to gain the trust of those they were spying against, become double agents, providing some valid although perhaps trivial data to the enemy. One, some or all of these types of characters appear in "spy literature."

I shall investigate the notion of the heroic spy, as well as many of the attributes that go along with heroism: honor, loyalty, and patriotism, many concepts commonly seen as antithetical to spies. In particular, I will examine “honor” and how it is recouped for the spy, a person whose occupation means that the phrase “as good as my word” should be suspect. I will also examine the multiple paradoxes that arise in the presentation of the spy as a hero, and how that presentation reveals anxiety about what activity is suitable for the “middling classes” and what should be strictly avoided by the upper classes. How does a nation born of war transform into a peacetime democracy? How do spying and its necessary secrets exist in an open society? Where does the spy enter the public realm from the domestic, and where does the public realm of men intersect with the political sphere of government? What do the terms “private” and “public” mean in a civil war?

In order to answer these questions, I will first begin by examining the real spies who became cultural icons and models for the heroic spy: Major John André of the British army and Captain Nathan Hale of the American army. Immortalized in numerous plays, novels, and poems, each influenced the portrayal of all American spies after them, whether real or fictional. Oddly, although each failed to achieve his mission and was captured by the opposing side—a fact which figures largely in their portrayal—each shaped the successful literary spy. I will then examine James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Spy* as the first model of a successful spy. While the legends about Hale and André, and Cooper’s fictional imagination were crucial in the early formation of the American literary spy, the experiences of real spies during the war both reflected and expanded the cultural depiction of the spy. The memoirs of Revolutionary spies infused the evolving genre with “gritty realism,” fixed the spy in the American middle-class, and influenced the earliest “ironic” spy story in American letters, Melville’s *Israel Potter*. It has been noted that spy literature is by and large a white, macho genre which relies on strategically placed, beautiful, docile women as stage props. In reality there were many female spies and spies of color, yet in literature and on stage only a handful of women, and almost no one who is not white, appear as spies before the Civil War. I will look at the few who appear prior to the Civil War and try to understand how they may have influenced the memoirs of women like Belle

Edmonds whose stories became popular texts, how American gender relations are connected to race relations in the spy novel, and how all reflect a particular world view shared by those who write spy fiction.

American spy fiction has evolved greatly from its early beginnings, and, our domestic situation being very stable, has tended to look outward to America's position in the world. As American's economic and cultural "neo-imperialism" has grown, our international situation has more closely paralleled that of Britain. Thus it should be no surprise that the two literary espionage traditions have converged, especially as British novels are transformed into American movies (often played in Britain) and British spy television series, *The Avengers* and *The Prisoner*, remain classics to American audiences. It is beyond the scope of my study to trace the spy through the history of the country, but I do hope to demonstrate the evolution of the genre and draw connections between the early tradition of the spy in American letters to some of the best selling spy thrillers written today. While Tom Clancy, Robert Ludlum, Martin Cruz Smith and other Americans owe much to the classic British thrillers, they also owe a great deal to James Fenimore Cooper, American melodrama, and the American captivity narrative.

Chapter Two

John André and Nathan Hale

Literature about military spies in America begins shortly after the Revolution. Perhaps the first appearance of a spy as a significant component of a story is in John Trumbull's *The Double Conspiracy; or Treason Discovered but Not Punished*, a drama printed in 1783, but probably never performed (Graff 56). "Spy" is "from New York." He is stranded in Connecticut, Trumbull's home state, and trying to get back to New York, which is occupied by the British and the site of a great deal of spy activity, both during the war and in its literary representations. Trumbull does not explain how "Spy" wound up in Connecticut, but he is well acquainted with Gibber, the play's primary Tory, and Gibber's daughter, the not entirely sympathetic victim of Spy's seduction. In many ways he resembles the military cad of seduction novels popular at the time, including Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1794), the anonymously authored *Amelia; or The Faithless Briton* (1798), and Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* (1797). Trumbull makes Spy a villain, which follows common perceptions of spying as a nasty, vulgar activity performed by those who were not entirely to be trusted. In her history of the Revolution and the early Republic, Mercy Otis Warren said "the character of a spy" has "ever been held mean and disgraceful by all classes of men" (264). Warren and Trumbull were not alone in their condemnation of spies, but the villainous spy disappeared quickly, replaced by a hero as spying became a patriotic activity whose potentially deadly consequences only magnified the spy's patriotic self-sacrifice.

Mainstream American spy literature begins with two actual spies, the American Captain Nathan Hale and the British Major John André, both of whom were executed as spies. John André and Nathan Hale rarely appear as more than footnotes in modern histories of the American Revolution, in part because their contributions were fairly minor. Both failed. André, although he did broker a deal with General Benedict Arnold, could not deliver West Point as planned; he was captured in civilian disguise by American militia men whom he mistook for British sympathizers. Hale, whose original mission on Long Island evaporated when the British invasion of New York City made knowing the British position on Long Island considerably

less crucial, attempted to gather information in New York and, when captured, confessed to spying.

Although both the British and the American armies captured and executed several spies, these two became the subjects of stories and ballads during the war, appeared in most of the early histories about the war, and appear in spirit, if not in person, in most antebellum spy literature.

In many ways, their postmortem celebrity seems explicable. Each was a personable young man who did not fit the stereotype of the spy as a suspicious, furtive figure lurking in dark corners. André was very handsome, and accomplished, with the elegant manners of a gentleman. Hale, the son of a minister, was the all-American boy: intelligent, athletic, and self-sacrificing. They were also tragically unsuited to the business of spying, and their failures may have heightened the sympathy with which people heard their stories. Yet the pathos of their tales as worthy young men who suffered death too soon does not seem enough to have changed the image of spying from a disreputable activity whose military value only just legitimizes its use to one of the most heroic activities possible during war, as it becomes in the surprisingly large body of literature about American espionage during the Revolution and beyond. André, in particular, a British officer linked to the most heinous of American villains, Benedict Arnold, seems an odd recipient for the flood of American sympathy expressed not only during the war, and shortly afterward, but throughout the nineteenth-century. But André, even more than Hale, captured the American imagination, and became the focal point for discussion about American anxiety regarding separation from Britain, the mutability of social position, the conflict between the desires for democratic government and the lingering fears that the "people" would be too easily swayed by the unscrupulous if ungoverned by a "wiser" aristocracy, and the fears that the Revolution would lead to exactly the same governing structure as that against which they had rebelled.

The Pathetic Tale of Major André

Chronologically, Hale's tale occurs first, although it would not be widely discussed until well after John André had become a household name. André was the more persistent cultural icon. Before the Civil War, his name is mentioned in works as varied as Judith Sargent Murray's *The Traveller Returned* (1796), Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*

(1850), Catharine Sedgwick's *The Linwoods; or Sixty Years After* (1835), as well as nearly every work featuring a "spy" prior to 1860. He also appeared as a character in several plays and novels, as well numerous biographies and histories. Indeed, the common, pseudo-private paperwork of his life became commercial and cultural merchandise. Publications available for sale after his execution included the proceedings of his trial, his will, letters he wrote, and letters of those who attended his execution. Beyond these artifacts, he circulated throughout the popular culture as a sympathetic character. Friends and strangers wrote poems for him. He appeared prominently in Revolutionary ballads and broadsides, as well as some heated newspaper editorials. Were it only the British who published this material, we might attribute the attention to nationalist interests after losing a war that Britain, militarily, should not have lost. However, much of the nationalist mourning for Major André was American. Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Tallmadge, two of Washington's most trusted officers, argued on André's behalf, urging leniency; several other major names in our history sang his praises. Joel Barlow, the poet and Revolutionary chaplain, was touched by André's death and wrote a letter describing the execution that circulated through print channels.⁴ William Dunlap, "the father of American theatre," wrote his best play about the tragic André. Many others who had never met André added their voices to the general mourning which continued for over a century.

There are many possible explanations for the American attention. For one, André was British. Given the dubious nature of spying as a not entirely honorable occupation, it is easier from an American perspective to identify "the first spy" as British. Also, the Americans had considerably more to gain by publicly announcing the capture of André than they did the capture of Hale since they could claim themselves victims of British nefarious deeds. As a by-product of Arnold's stunning defection, André's capture was already part of something huge. Perhaps hoping to swap André for Arnold, Washington did not execute André as quickly as he might have otherwise. André met a full court martial, was the subject of tense negotiations, and was allowed to write to loved ones. From the time of his capture until his execution, over a week passed. While this may not seem long by today's civil justice incarceration standards, for the martial law of the Revolution, it was quite a while indeed. Justice, in the case of spies, was typically executed quickly after a brief trial, after which the spy's commanding officer might be notified. In contrast,

the capture of André, a favorite of Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander-in- chief, generated a flurry of letter writing and negotiations on both sides. As a result, there exists a long paper trail regarding his execution. In addition, he had befriended many Americans while stationed in Philadelphia and New York and while in captivity, during which time he had many long conversations with Tallmadge, Hamilton, and others. Thus many Americans could testify to his good character.

John André's story is inextricably linked with that of Benedict Arnold whose name has become synonymous with "traitor." As Carl Van Doren notes in his study of the Arnold defection, *Secret History of the American Revolution*, Arnold was neither the first nor the last traitor in this country, but he was the most conspicuous, and had laid a plan, which, had it succeeded, would have been by far the most dangerous (143).⁵ Arnold, a successful military strategist who was instrumental in the American victories at Saratoga and Ticonderoga (historian Nathan Miller has compared him to George S. Patton as a military leader [32]) had several grievances (real and imagined) against the fledgling government. In 1778, Congress apparently slighted him by promoting five of his juniors (and in Arnold's mind his inferiors) to the rank of major general ahead of him. Congress dubiously explained that since Connecticut already had two major generals, promoting Arnold would tip the balance of military power too heavily in favor of one state. Washington, wishing not to lose so gifted a commander, asked Arnold not to resign and asked Congress to correct the significant oversight of not promoting Arnold. After several months, Congress promoted Arnold retroactively, but the incident, along with the lingering legal skirmishes with the Council of Pennsylvania, left a very bitter taste in Arnold's mouth. Additionally, Arnold was a bad businessman with mounting debts. Combined with a bad head for investment, his inattention to detail led him into severe personal financial problems as well as substantial legal difficulty with the Continental Congress over some questionable expenditures of military funds. A man of extreme passions, he often excited extreme reactions in others. Those who followed him as a commander would have followed him to the ends of the earth, while those he alienated became sworn enemies. A few such powerful enemies succeeded in having him tried on charges of financial misdealings in 1779. Although the court martial cleared him of the charges and "intentional" wrongdoing, it requested that Commander-in-Chief General George Washington reprimand Arnold for the

appearance of impropriety. Later that year, Arnold petitioned Sir Henry Clinton, Commander-in Chief of the British forces, to inform him that Arnold's services could be had for the right price.

Here enters Major John André.⁶ André, aide-de-camp to Clinton, controlled Clinton's spy network. He had an indirect personal connection to Arnold, having been active in Peggy Shippen's social set in Philadelphia during the British occupation of the city, prior to her marriage to Arnold. Clinton placed André in charge of the negotiations with Arnold, most of which took place as an exchange of seeming business letters between a Gustavus (Arnold) and a John Anderson (André), and some as letters between André and Mrs. Arnold, with messages written in invisible ink between the lines of the letter. To conclude the negotiation, André sailed close to West Point to meet Arnold. Arnold sent a messenger to bring André to shore in the neutral territory between the two camps on the Hudson. As the hour approached dawn, Arnold urged André to accompany him to his friend Joshua Hett Smith's home to finish the negotiation and receive written plans of the fortifications (and their weak spots). The Americans fired upon André's ship, the *H.M.S. Vulture*, forcing it away from shore, making for a more dangerous row from shore which Smith refused to take. Upon Arnold's suggestion André removed his British uniform, put on a cloak and stuffed the papers into his boot, and traveled back toward British lines by a circuitous route over land with a pass from Arnold. In doing so, he violated all of Sir Henry's excellent advice not to go behind American lines, nor take anything in writing, nor throw off his British uniform. Smith escorted André to the neutral territory and then left him to complete the rest of the journey himself.

While traveling, he was stopped by three irregular troops. André, who was lost, asked them to which party they belonged. When told "the lower one," he took this to mean that they were Tory sympathizers and revealed himself as a British officer. When they revealed they were not Tories, but Rebels, he confusedly produced the pass from Arnold. Suspicious, they refused to let him go and brought him to the nearest American camp under the charge of Lieutenant Colonel Jameson. Although the pass and the papers caused Jameson to be suspicious, probably because of an overzealous adherence to the protocol of the military chain of command, he sent André under guard to West Point along with a note informing General Arnold of "Anderson's" capture. On the urging of Major Benjamin Tallmadge, himself a spymaster, Jameson sent the

papers to Washington. Tallmadge had also recommended that both André and the note be brought back, and not sent to Arnold, but Jameson recalled only André.

Arnold received the news while at breakfast waiting for Washington to arrive. Excusing himself, he escaped to the *Vulture* before Washington and his aides understood what happened. Needless to say, the planned attack on West Point did not occur. Washington, already betrayed once by Dr. Benjamin Church, his hospital-general, who had provided information to General Gage while Gage was the commander-in-chief of the British army, was furious. Clinton, having lost his favorite aide-de-camp, not to mention the chance to capture West Point and Washington himself, and left with nothing to show for it but a money-hungry, traitorous general, was none too pleased either. André confessed to his involvement in the plot, but did not name any of his co-conspirators. Perhaps to demonstrate that vengeance did not determine the punishment, the Americans were scrupulously fair toward André and held a full court martial in front of a board of fourteen major-generals and brigadier generals, headed by Major-General Nathaniel Greene, which found him guilty of spying and sentenced him to death.

The issue of André's guilt caused a great deal of letter writing between the Americans and the British, most notably between Clinton and his aides and Washington. Clinton maintained that André went under a flag of truce to meet Arnold, so the mission was entirely above board and not a clandestine spying mission. In addition, because Arnold escorted him across American lines under protest, he was not guilty of entering the enemy camp for purposes of gathering information. His being captured (in a disguise thrust upon him by Arnold) in the neutral ground between the two camps violated the understandings of the capture of prisoners of war. Debate raged for years about whether the three, John Paulding, Issac Van Wart, and David Williams, were patriotic heroes protecting the neutral ground for freedom loving Americans or some of the many highwaymen who harassed passing travelers in the area.

However, as Washington and his board of generals noted in their verdict, the mission André allegedly conducted under a flag of truce, that is, the negotiation for Arnold's treason, was not the sort of activity which flags are meant to protect. André, for his part (and endearing himself to the Americans), said that the flag defense was nonsense; the court martial proceedings state that he confessed "That it was

impossible for him to so consider [himself under a flag] and that if he had he certainly would have returned under it" (qtd. in Abbatt 61). Whether in uniform or not, André had on his person documents which a British officer was not supposed to have, documents of a highly sensitive nature which would give the British great advantage should they attack West Point. If one narrowly defines "spy" as someone in disguise behind the enemy's lines for purposes of covertly gathering information, one could question whether André was a spy. However, if one looks at the objectives of the mission, certainly the damage that would have been inflicted by Major André's mission, had it succeeded, those objectives qualify the mission as an espionage activity, even if there had been a flag, for it would have been used under false pretense.

This issue of André's guilt is central to not only the matter of how André would be executed, but also to the question of honor. Spies were hanged like criminals. Death by firing squad, like death on the battlefield, preserves the victim's honor. Death by hanging does not. This may seem a fine point, since execution of either form results in death. But when one has little else left, protecting one's good name might seem considerably more important. For gentlemen, honor was a crucial aspect of military protocol.

André, the son of a well-to-do Swiss merchant and a French woman, did not belong to the nobility, but cultivated many of the refinements of gentlemen. He was a passable artist, a poet, a sometimes actor and playwright, and a gifted conversationalist. He organized balls while with the occupying British force in Philadelphia, and mingled with New York City society when stationed there. He charmed not only American society ladies, but also his captors including Tallmadge and Colonel Alexander Hamilton, General Washington's aide. Hamilton in a letter wrote,

There was something singularly interesting in the character and fortunes of André. To an excellent understanding, well improved by education and travel, he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantage of a pleasing person. ... His sentiments were elevated, and inspired esteem; they had a softness that conciliated affection. His elocution was handsome, his address easy, polite, and insinuating. (qtd in Benson 72)

In many ways he epitomized the ideal self-made man of a meritocracy. Certainly the officers of Washington's staff could have identified with the charming son of an immigrant merchant whose father had

prospered through hard work, and who had further raised his social standing through military service. One can see why Hamilton, the illegitimate son of a Jamaican plantation owner and later the *wunderkind* of the Federalists, would be particularly sympathetic to the dashing young major.

The multiple letter writers seem most impressed with his bravery in the face of death, and most of their anecdotes were captured in the popular and literary myths that surrounded André's memory. James Thacher, a surgeon serving with the Americans, published his journal in 1823 (it was republished seventeen times during the nineteenth century), providing the source for many subsequent historians and biographers. He recounts a popular tale: André's servant, Laune, was so overcome with grief that André told him, "Leave me until you can show yourself more manly"(227). But what most impressed his chroniclers was the way André faced his death. In impeccable uniform, he marched calmly with his guards, commenting, "I am very much surprised to find your troops under so good discipline, and your music is excellent"(John VanDyk, qtd in Abbatt 71). Upon seeing the gallows, he reportedly paused and said, "I am reconciled to my death, but I detest the mode" (Thacher 228).⁷ Aside from this momentary display of emotion, he jumped sprightly on the wagon, took the rope from the hands of the hangman,⁸ placed it around his neck and pronounced "It will be but a momentary pang." When asked if he had any last words, he said, "I pray to you bear witness that I meet my fate like a brave man" (Thacher 228). A letter reprinted in *American Magazine* May, 1788, under the title "Death of Major André" is typical in describing the pathetic scene, and then concluding: "But stern justice to our country sanctified the cruel deed; and whilst our eyes overflowed with tears of compassion, our reason assured us, that the act was perfectly right" (412).

Early Literary Versions of the Story

After André's death, his friend, poet Anna Seward, published an ode, "Monody on Major André," in England, along with letters André had written in 1769. The "Monody" was printed eight times between 1781 and 1798 in America, and was also appended to several editions of Dunlap's play *André*. Alternately, some editions included an amusing poem André had written for the troops entitled "The Cow Chace," a satirical

send-up of the ballad "Chevy Chase" in which he ridicules General Anthony Wayne's attempt to storm the British blockhouse on the Hudson; the raid resulted in Americans retreating along with several head of cattle.

On this side of the Atlantic, Philip Freneau wrestled with an American-friendly telling of the story in 1780 but never finished it. His dramatic fragment⁹ seems to waver in its presentation of Arnold as either evil incarnate, or as a man tempted by British gold. André has a more sinister cast than in later presentations; he initiates the correspondence, after an inquiry which determines that Arnold would be susceptible to a bribe, and he proposes to meet Arnold behind enemy lines, acknowledging his planned role as a spy. It is difficult to tell how he would have appeared at his gallows scene since the play abruptly ends after his capture, and the manuscript of the capture itself is missing. It is possible that, for Freneau, the events were simply too fresh to be represented at the time. He mentions the event briefly in "On Sir Henry's Recall" (1782):

Thought you, "If friend Arnold this fort will deliver,
 "We then shall be masters of all Hudson's river,
 "The east and the south losing communication,
 "The Yankies will die by the act of starvation."

So off you sent André, (not guided by Pallas)
 Who soon purchased Arnold, and with him the gallows;
 Your loss I conceive than your gain was far greater,
 You lost a good fellow, and got a vile traitor. (155)

Sir Henry Clinton's bad bargain will recur as a motif for many of the versions of the incident that follow. Although Freneau could mention the subject casually, along the lines of the popular songs that followed the incident, he could not finish a full drama so close to the events. This hesitancy may have been compounded by the moral ambiguity of "a good fellow," who happened to be a British spy, dying on behalf of a "vile traitor," who, prior to his defection, had been one of the boldest American commanders.

Apparently other authors felt similarly. As a subject of a published literary work, André did not appear until 1796 in a casual mention in Judith Sargent Murray's play *The Traveller Returned*. He is

mentioned, as he occasionally is in the later literature, to demonstrate Washington's great sense of justice which rises above mere emotion. The play is a parlor drama, set only tangentially during the Revolution. Early in the action, the stranger Rambleton, newly arrived from England (but American-born), comments on Washington, saying, "It is hardly possible to reverence his [Washington's] virtues too highly; and yet, the ignominious death of Major André has taught some people to question his sensibility." To which Major Camden emotionally replies, "Gracious God! Had they witnessed the struggles, which the fate of that interesting, brave, and truly accomplished man occasioned in the bosom of the Warrior, they would have learned to venerate the sorrows of a martial spirit. But, Sir, there are periods, when *sacrifices on the altar of public opinion become absolutely indispensable*" (644). Washington's implementation of justice does not rest in public opinion polls, Murray suggests, but transcends the popular for the good of the nation. Washington's sorrow at signing the death sentence, and the inevitability of that sentence, composes as much a part of André's legend as André's bravery on the gallows. As father of his country, Washington's distribution of punishment and discipline is as disinterested yet compassionate as that of the perfect parent.

Aside from this causal mention of André, the play does have a spying subplot. Later in the play, Rambleton's sudden and unexplained appearance from England and his mysterious trunks cause the Dutch innkeeper and his wife to suspect Rambleton of being a spy. They hatch a plot to turn him in to the Committee of Safety, and while he is gone, to break into his trunks and steal away with his gold to New York "until opportunity offered to quit this *Freetonian* land altogether" (660). Arnold's treason is mentioned to place the play in time (shortly after the execution of André) and to explain why the otherwise forthright-seeming gentleman Mr. Rambleton is being held, and why his association with the well-known and forthright Major Camden (Rambleton's long lost son, unbeknownst to Camden) would cast a possible aspersion on Major Camden's character. When the Committee learns that the innkeeper who informed on Rambleton has stolen Rambleton's possessions, they are convinced of Rambleton's innocence and accept his explanation that he has disguised his identity (after spending the last nineteen years in England) to test his wife's fidelity.

The play is often dismissed as derivative of the British social comedy of Sheridan, or of Royall Tyler's Americanized version, *The Contrast* (Meserve 153-4). If studied seriously, it is studied as a proto-

feminist drama focusing discussion on the domestic plot and the female characters (Schofield 260-273).

However, while the actual discussion of André and Arnold is minimal, the play provides an example of the circulation of the peripheral issues and motifs of early spy literature in the general literature. The motif of disguise figures prominently, as in many early nineteenth-century texts. Since the dissembling required for spying was one of its least honorable aspects, this routine use of disguise for a personal matter removes some of the stigma. Rambleton's disguise and mysterious manner cause him to be questioned by the Committee of Safety, but his acquittal gives tacit endorsement to the idea that disguise in and of itself is not dishonorable. Indeed, it seems to give tacit approval of his spying on his wife. Although not a military mission, Rambleton's actions could be seen as a sort of domestic espionage. In addition, André as the "interesting, brave, and truly accomplished man" who died too young will circulate through a number of texts. But most significant is Murray's characterization of Washington as patriarch dispensing justice wisely from a distance.

Washington as just leader is a critical aspect of the story. The most problematical aspect of André's execution was how to make the Americans (notably Washington) appear heroic as they snuff out this admirable life. Since the innate nobility of André could not help but move the feeling American heart (as it did those of Hamilton and Tallmadge), Washington must be sensible to André's natural nobility which would shine in the meritocracy the largely Federalist chroniclers of André promoted. Washington's early biographers, Mason Locke Weems, John Marshall, Jared Sparks, and Washington Irving all comment extensively on the incident. Weems, ever hyperbolic, wrote that André's candor "melted the angel soul of Washington: and the tears of the hero were mingled with the ink that signed the death-warrant of the hapless youth." (84). Marshall notes that "never perhaps did the Commander-in-chief obey with more reluctance the stern mandates of duty and policy" (445). Sparks dwelled considerably longer on Washington's humanity than André's fate in a similar sentence:

There was no stronger trait in the character of Washington than humanity; the misfortunes and sufferings of others touched him keenly; and his feelings were deeply moved at that part he was compelled to act in consenting to the death of André; yet justice to the office he held,

and to the cause for which his countrymen were shedding their blood, left him no alternative.

(317)

Of course all the biographers emphasize both the punishment's fairness and necessity. But they also distance Washington from the declaration of the punishment. Yes, he signed the death warrant, but only because the personified "duty and policy" so mandated. Irving alone gives agency to Washington in his decision.

[N]ot to check the sentiment of sympathy awakened in André's behalf by his personal qualities, but to vindicate the fair name of Washington from that "blot" which some have attempted to cast upon it, because, in exercising his stern duty as protector of the public weal, during a time of secret treason, he listened to policy and justice rather than mercy. (87)

Irving gives the decision process a democratic spin by having Washington consult with his generals.

This presentation was necessary not only to maintain the image of Washington as a benevolent leader, but also to counteract Anna Seward's searing portrayal of Washington in her "Monody":

Oh WASHINGTON I thought thee great and good,
Nor knew thy Nero-thirst of guiltless blood!
Severe to use the pow'r that Fortune gave,
Thou cool determined Murderer of the Brave! (149)

That passage only begins the attack. Seward never discusses the reason for André's capture, dwelling instead on his role as a "star-crossed lover" who undertook his military career in America as a way of escaping his sorrow in being torn from his fiancée Honora Sneyd after their parents agreed that they were too young to marry. This highly romanticized version of the courtship, whose end seems to have been felt most by Seward, would circulate through American texts.

A sympathetic British audience could ignore André's actions as a spy. Well after the war, Sir Henry Clinton and his aides continued to deny that André acted in any fashion other than as a legal delegate (Clinton 215-218; Simcoe 294). Americans who wished to make this incident the stuff of tragedy would have to address André's crime without condemning the man, which could prove a particularly difficult task.

Apparently a few early attempts addressed the issue in more depth than Murray's. In his study of military spy plays, Stephen Graff notes that during the same year as Murray's play, two plays specifically regarding the Arnold-André conspiracy were produced. Of Mrs. Marriot's play, *Death of Major André; or The Land We Live In*, little is known other than it was produced in Philadelphia by Wignell's company (Graff 68). Theater historian George O. Seilhamer notes that the performance announcement on April 16, 1796, says it was "performed but once in America" (12). For William Hill Brown's *West Point Preserved*, produced in Boston in April at the Haymarket Theater, there exists a cast list which indicates that Arnold shared top billing with Washington and LaFayette (Graff 69; Seilhamer 363). In addition, Honora Sneyd, André's former fiancée, appears as a character named Honoria. Although it is risky to conjecture about a play for which there is no extant script, Honoria's inclusion in the cast list seems to prefigure her appearance in William Dunlap's play as the tragic young women destroyed by André's death.¹⁰ In retelling a historical incident that demanded extensive discussion of honor, the pun on André's ex-girlfriend's name would be hard for any author to resist. The cast also includes "Mrs. Arnold," who does not appear again in a stage version until the 1840s, and "Greene," suggesting that the play includes some portion of the court martial, even if only the verdict. Although Brown is better known as the author of the "first American novel," *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), apparently this posthumously produced play enjoyed some success, running six successive nights (Seilhamer 363). If his play at all resembled his novel, it was probably a didactic work about the dangers of lost honor. Certainly, if a man's honor is comparable to a woman's virtue, André's tale could be seen as a seduction tale of a man falling for the lure of easy glory and ill-gotten fame.

Dunlap's *André*: A Male Seduction Tale

In 1798, two years after these plays and Murray's fleeting mention of the affair, William Dunlap produced his play *André*. In his foreward to the play he writes:

More than nine years ago the Author made choice of the death of Major André as the Subject of a Tragedy, and part of what is now offered to the public was written at that time. Many circumstances discouraged him from finishing his Play, and among them must be reckoned a

prevailing opinion that recent events are unfit subjects for tragedy. These discouragements have at length all given way to his desire of bringing a story on the Stage so eminently fitted, in his opinion, to excite interest in the breasts of an American audience....

If this Play is successful, it will be proof that recent events may be so managed in tragedy as to command popular attention; if it is unsuccessful, the question must remain undetermined until some more powerful writer shall again make the experiment. (510)

Dunlap envisioned the play as a tragedy, and attempted to depict André as a tragic hero whose tragic flaw is his ambition for glory, which leads him to commit the dishonorable act of traveling behind American lines in disguise. As tragedy, the play doesn't work. The action of the play takes place entirely within the American camp after André has been discovered and confessed to his crimes and is awaiting only the enactment of his sentence. The moment of revelation occurred long before and the character of André, although noble and admirable, is static. If anything, his actions serve as a cautionary tale for his friend, the (very) young American Bland:

Attentive hear and judge me.—

Pleas'd with the honours daily shower'd upon me,

...

Nothing then I saw

But confidential favour in the service,

My country's glory, and my mounting fame;

Forgot my former purity of thought,

And high-ton'd honour's scruples disregarded. (525)

André is the honorable man who temporarily forgot the importance of honor and is proof of the consequences of forgetting the moral scruples which lie behind honorable military service. Even a "country's glory" is not worth sacrificing one's honor. This principle becomes something of a contradiction as Bland works through the conflicts between self-interest and national interest, and reason and emotion. The unwritten resolution of the conflict is that any service to a just cause is honorable (a sentiment often

attributed to Captain Hale in his decision to take the role of a spy), so American actions to preserve the nation (by definition “a just cause”) are more readily excused as honorable (as in the execution of André). André’s act, the facilitation of Arnold’s treason, cannot be excused as a just cause.

Although awkward as a tragedy, the play does work as a dramatic *bildungsroman* for Bland, the junior American officer, as he learns to reconcile his desire to see his friend André saved and his desire to see America’s interests preserved. The education process takes place within the confines of the military family: Colonel M’Donald as the stern uncle who lectures on the importance of reason, and the General [Washington] as benevolent patriarch who forgives Bland even when he commits the seemingly treasonous act of throwing away his cockade in a burst of passion. The General is wise enough to recognize the difference between Bland’s impetuous act and André’s premeditated transgression of the rules of military conduct even if the audience was not.¹¹ Although Bland’s actual family appears in the play, the primary familial relationship is that of the military family. Bland’s father is a colonel in Washington’s army who is himself a prisoner rumored to be swapped at any time. The British threaten to retaliate for André’s execution by executing Colonel Bland (no doubt inspired by Arnold’s letter to Washington that, if André should be killed, the British would retaliate by killing ten South Carolinian prisoners of war). His wife, young Bland’s mother, pleads to the General to spare André and thus save her husband. Colonel Bland, however, wise in the understanding of military necessity, writes to the general: “Do *your* duty” (541, original emphasis).

Bland ultimately rejects his mother’s feminine weakness in favor of his father’s military strength, separating himself from his baby brothers who still cling to their mother’s skirts. His mother, in turn, removes the late arriving Honora, André’s former fiancée, from the military camp into a domestic sphere. Honora, unable to handle the military justice, collapses into a state of incoherence and confusion. It is in the masculine world of the military camp that issues of honor, justice, and national security are enforced. It is a world that Anna Seward, for one, would not understand. Although Dunlap does not mention Seward per se, one of the minor characters is named Seward, calling to mind the author of the popular monody.

In its emphasis on the masculine sphere, and its requirement that young Bland, not André separate himself from the feminine domestic world, the play embodies a phenomenon of colonial relations that Ashis

Nandy has described in his analysis of Indian postcolonialism as “hyper-masculinity” (7). Nandy does not see emphasis on the “masculine” (as characterized by courage, aggression, achievement, control, competition and power [9]) in colonial India until 1830, because, he explains, early British colonial officers were often subsumed into Indian culture and tended to think of gender as Indians did (4-5). Over time, British conceptions of gender took hold. In America, the timeline for equating gender relations to political relations mirror the smaller gap between English culture and settler culture. Since the settlers’ culture more closely aligns with the English perspective of imagining colonial relationships as familial and gendered, one would expect “hyper-masculinity” as a colonial attribute to appear earlier. As Jay Fliegelman has argued so persuasively in *Prodigals and Pilgrims*, both the American colonies and England saw the colonial relationship as one between a parent (England) and his offspring (the colonies). The conflict erupted as a result of England’s failure to see that the colonies had come of age. Since both the parent and the offspring are understood to be male, by asserting the masculine, the Americans demonstrate their position as adult men capable of governing the colonies and meeting the demands of the political sphere by taking responsibility for their actions. In the military sphere of the play, those who are wrong admit their guilt. Bland, learning the harsh lessons of the public sphere, seeks forgiveness from M’Donald for his insubordination. M’Donald welcomes him into the military/public sphere:

Why now this glads me; for thou now art right.
 O may thy tongue, henceforth utter nought
 But Truth’s sweet precepts, in fair Virtue’s cause!
 Give me thy hand. [*Takes his hand*] Ne’er may it grasp a sword
 But in defense of justice. (556)

André, an exemplary prisoner, admitted his guilt immediately and reconciles himself to his death, despite the attempts by British command, Bland, and others, to save him. His confession, in part, lends legitimacy to the death sentence.¹² He is the noble opponent who firmly believes in the justness of his cause. Otherwise, as he tells Bland while marching to his execution, “Believe me, but for this [conviction in my cause] I should/Not have willingly drawn sword against her [America]” (562-3).

The masculine world of the play is quite contained, aside from the brief intrusions by Mrs. Bland and Honora. At times, the spectrum of male homosocial desire swings from “father and son” type chats to “male bonding” toward an epistemology of the closet in the relationship between Bland and André, a relationship which Bland must outgrow in order to mature into a leader of men.¹³ Bland’s language regarding André not only expresses great passion, sounding more like the pleas of a lover than a friend, but also feminizes André: André is “the lov’d object” who, during Bland’s stay in a British prison, “like an angel.../nurst and cur’d/He lov’d and made his friend” (517). Although Dunlap does not dwell on the image of André’s body, as many of the historical accounts do, André is certainly an attractive character whose attributes suggest the preservation of civilization and civility—poetry, nursing, and virtue—attributes commonly ascribed to women. By connecting André, the only British character, to the feminine, Dunlap has transformed England from patriarch to “mother country,” removing the threat associated with the father, and has made André, hence England, the colonized. He has also transformed André’s story into a seduction tale. In essence, André is the fallen woman who succumbed, in this case to ambition, forgetting “my former purity of thought,/ and high-ton’d scruples” (525). As in the case of the fallen women of seduction novels popular at the time, we can pity André, but we are not allowed to question his death. We can, however, learn from his lesson about the consequences of lost honor.

The masculinity of *André* may be one reason why critics do not connect the play (and later versions of the story) to the popular seduction narrative form, generally seen as a tool for socializing young women. Fliegelman, in his reading of Dunlap’s play, sees “the elevating of André to the status of sacrificial lamb (a meek and mild Christ) [as] one way by which Revolutionary America relieved its guilty awareness that, in some cases, it must deny gratitude to those truly deserving of it in order to complete deliverance from the larger claims of a falsely extorted gratitude” (216). But this reading ignores the recognition of André’s role in the Arnold treason as well as the acceptance that André must be punished for that role. It was the nature of the punishment, and the knowledge that the primary criminal, Arnold, would go free, that distressed so many of André’s American sympathizers. Likewise, Fliegelman’s assertion that André represents the “good aspects of the parent,” which must be sacrificed with the “evil” represented by George III (218), makes little

sense given the feminized language Bland uses to describe him, and the absence of any parental/filial stratified relationship between them. For the most part, André is on the same plane as Bland—he is a friend, not a mentor. André resembles a lover more than a parent, but one who has strayed from the path of chaste honor. André's action, after all, is a betrayal, as one might expect from a lover, rather than the abuse of power one might expect from a parent. Bland, and American soldiers, must learn from his example in order to become a son of liberty and enter Washington's public sphere.

Despite the title, the play is less about André than about defining honor and justice, and ensuring that justice is served. One could argue, in fact, that Murray's *The Traveller Returned* encompasses more spying than *André*. As a spy story, *André* is only nominally about a spy, focusing more on the resulting questions of honor which follow the occupation. Despite the lack of spying, or much discussion of Arnold's treason, the play is significant in the oeuvre of spy literature for a number of reasons. One is the emphasis on the importance of soldiers performing their assigned missions. Although André condemns his actions harshly, "Rather my blood should bathe these hostile shores / And have it said, 'he died a gallant soldier,'" Bland, the everyman American, notes "it was thy duty so to serve thy country" (525). The general, in explaining to the British officer why André's execution must stand, despite British threats of retaliation, says,

I, likewise, am

A soldier; entrusted by my country.

What I shall judge most for that country's good

That shall I do. (538)

More to the point, he tells Bland why he must, despite André's many good qualities, execute André: "Millions demand the death of this young man./ My injur'd country, he his forfeit life must yield to shield thy lacerated breast" (535). The separation between a soldier's performance of a mission in support of his government and the government itself has several precedents in American literature, notably Mercy Otis Warren's favorable presentation of General Gage (renamed "General Sylla") in *The Group*, a play that skewered the British and Tory politicians responsible for the Blockade of Boston. As Susan Jeffords notes in *The Remasculinization of America*, the same rhetorical devices are used in the popular presentations of the

far more culturally problematical Vietnam War (3-4). In addition, the subordination of the commander-in-chief to the civilian population ("millions demand the death") reflects the Constitutional provision that the military is subordinate to civilian authority and recalls one of George III's crimes listed in the Declaration of Independence: "He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power." While the Constitution was not yet a reality during the War, the ratification in 1787 was recent memory in 1798, the second year of the administration of the first non-military president. Through this distancing, a soldier may salvage individual honor even if commanded to perform a dishonorable act, such as spying, if so demanded by his country.¹⁴ In addition, the individual commander who signs the death warrant is justified if the execution is required to restore the national sovereignty. The General tells Bland:

Since they [the British] have hurl'd war on us, we must shew

That by the laws of war we will abide;

And have the *power* to bring their acts to trial. (541)

Thus this fierce demonstration of national power is all the fault of the British. Had they not challenged our sovereignty as a nation and forced this war (an outrageous statement since America fought the Revolution in order to obtain sovereignty as a nation), we would not be in the position of executing this prisoner. We must execute the prisoner, therefore, to reassert our power in the face of such challenges to our authority. Michel Foucault notes that the public execution is as much political ritual as judicial: "It is a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconstituted" (48). Certainly André's execution represented a highly political assertion of the Continental Army's control over the territory around West Point and its right to execute a member of the British commander-in-chief's staff (André, as a major, was not a particularly high-ranking officer, but as Clinton's aide-de-camp he was quite important), one which the British Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe, André's friend and successor as aide to General Clinton, disputes in an equally political refutation of that right, "Major André was murdered upon private, not public considerations" (294), implying that the Americans not only have no place in judging André's actions, which any officer in the British army would have performed in similar circumstances, but also, by their miscarriage of justice, have no place in the public realm as a sovereign nation. In the play, and in other American versions of the story, Washington's

right to execute André does not come under question: Washington's, and by extension, America's, sovereignty is assumed and the British are depicted as the interlopers questioning that sovereignty. Indeed, many authors go further and imply that Washington *needed* to execute André to preserve the nascent nation.

Certainly the ethical logic becomes rather circular and the situation morally ambiguous, despite Dunlap's attempts to extricate the American commander from the moral quagmire of the incident. The play negotiates between presenting André as an almost Christ-like figure (not entirely unlike Melville's Billy Budd half a century later¹⁵) and a fallen angel whose transgression as tempter recalls the original fallen angel, Lucifer. These two views are best personified by Bland's emotional view of André, who protected Bland when he was imprisoned in the British camp, and M'Donald's clinical view which sees the execution as necessary to eradicate the evil that would undercut the American cause. André, the little he appears on the stage, seems to us a contrite, honorable man willing to face the consequences for his actions. In contrast to Bland's emotional judgment, and M'Donald's logical judgment, the General, with a combination of compassion and rational maturity, can both execute the punishment necessary for the survival of the country and feel sympathy for the victim. The General provides a model for young Bland as he learns to valorize the responsibility he has to his country over his responsibility to friends. For those in the audience who may have missed the necessary privileging of public over private duties, the General reveals the same dilemma in his response to Colonel Bland's letter. Committed to the action which will condemn his friend to death, action which Colonel Bland urges him to take, the General exits, "with emotion" saying "O, Bland! My countryman!"(541), yet not wavering from his course of action.

Honor, we learn, resides in the public only by its strength in the private. M'Donald, pointing out the contradictions in Bland's position, notes, "How self intrudes, delusive, on man's thoughts!/He sav'd thy life, yet strove to damn thy country"(545). Honor has far less to do with one's friends than it does with one's moral conviction. M'Donald responds to Bland's threats to spread tales of M'Donald's cowardice, "My honour is so much, so truly mine,/ That none hath the power to wound it, save myself"(547). Likewise, one cannot blame another for one's own lapse in honor, a lesson André teaches by example in his own exculpation of his acts.

André's recognition of his guilt and his bravery in the face of death illustrate another motif in the early formation of the spy story. Even though André is guilty, and he and those around him (Bland more grudgingly than the others) recognize this guilt, he is still heroic. His spying activity has been mediated by the voiced excuse "It was thy duty to serve thy country," and his real culpability lay in (1) disguising his identity, which audience members would understand was the work of Arnold who tricked young André behind American lines in the first place, and (2) providing the means for Arnold to behave treasonously, which one could argue would have happened anyway. His heroism results entirely from his confession and his reconciliation to his fate. His upper lip is remarkably firm, shaking only when Honora appears (a reminder of his lost honor), and he learns that he had been tricked into leaving her (as he lost his honor due to Arnold's treachery). His private grief acts as a mirror of his public shame and the political disaster he has brought down on England. As he marches to his death, the ideal audience regrets that his death should cause so much pain to the people on stage, but feels that it is a just sentence.

Although a critical success in the twentieth century, the play bombed on stage. Opening 30 March 1798, the first night's take (\$817) seemed promising (Dunlap called it a "temporary relief"), but the attendance on the second night dropped considerably (\$271 in receipts), and the third night, the author's benefit night, might not have occurred had Dunlap not been manager (Philbrick 99).¹⁶ There have been several suggestions as to why the production did not do well.¹⁷ Dunlap himself blamed the jingoism of the audience who hissed Bland's throwing of the cockade, as well as the ill-prepared actor, Thomas Cooper, playing Bland, who during "what was intended as the most pathetic scene of the play" forgot his lines and kept whispering for the prompter, sinking "in unutterable sorrow on the breast of his overwhelmed friend" (*History* 2:21-22). In his journal for 2 April, prior to the second and third performances, Dunlap wrote, "I am told that the people are so offended at the Cockade business as to threaten to hiss off the play tonight." (qtd. in Marble 256). Accordingly he added a scene in the fifth act in which a repentant Bland receives the cockade from M'Donald. But it could not save the play.

André in Popular Culture

Dunlap, in desperate financial straits, turned the play into the sort of spectacle he decried in his review of John Daly Burk's *Bunker-Hill; or the Death of General Warren*, which he called "the most execrable of the Grub Street kind" (*History* 1: 312). On 4 July 1803, he opened *The Glory of Columbia: Her Yeomanry!*, which he described as "a holiday drama...occasionally murdered for the amusement of holiday fools" (*History* 2:21). Although Dunlap culled the third act entirely from *André*, as well as several scenes from the fourth act, the title communicates that the new play focuses less on André himself than on Williams, Paulding, and Van Vert [sic], the yeomen captors of André. The greatly expanded cast list includes not only the captors, but also David Williams's sister Sally, a comic Irishman named Dennis O'Bogg, a few nameless soldiers, and Arnold himself.

The rustics rarely share the stage with the officers who populated *André*. They appear in exactly two scenes: one in which they capture André, and one in which Williams declines Arnold's offer of a cushy headquarters job in order to go back on the battlefield (a recurring motif of American spy/military stories—the real work is done in the field, not in the office). As a result of the separation between the rustics and the officers, the play has a schizophrenic quality as it switches between the high tragedy of André and the low comedy of the rustics. Even so, it moves closer toward "the American spy story" than *André*; it emphasizes André's action as a spy, and Arnold's as the treacherous would-be double agent. André still functions as a sacrificial lamb, but the tangible Arnold stands as the villain of the play, not vague notions of American justice.

It also better satisfied the demands of American popular culture at the time, by focusing on the working-class Americans as the central characters rather than on the British prisoner who serves as a catalyst to prepare a young member of the elite for the political sphere. Dunlap heightens the patriotism considerably. Although much of Bland's personal misgivings about André's impending execution remain, the "cockade incident" is deleted, along with Bland's accusatory and insubordinate language toward both the General (now identified as "General Washington") and M'Donald, who has been deleted entirely. Although Bland still requests Washington to spare André's life, he does not throw the temper tantrum that he had in

André. In addition to purging Bland's objectionable insubordination, Dunlap adds the utterly patriotic rustics who, when not chasing away British soldiers, sing patriotic songs, and bask in the glow of praise from Washington (which happens off stage). Williams, for example, says, "I don't think I ever felt so proud as I did just now, when our great commander, our own glorious Washington, took me by the hand and said, 'thank you,' ay he said, 'well done my lad, thank you'"(100). They all but crown Washington as they compare his head to the "sight of a white faced Corolus, or a yellow George Rex" (100). Rather than end with the tragic march of André off to the gallows, the play ends with a rousing speech from Washington following the victory at Yorktown, which the rustics and Dennis O'Bogg, now an American, watch from the other side of the stage, and a song praising "Immortal Washington."

Dunlap probably made many of these patriotic changes with a clear eye toward the box office. Since he was convinced that the cockade incident had proven fatal to the play's reception, he eliminated it. In *André*, Dunlap had kept the praise of Washington muted by not directly identifying Washington as such and making him a noble character plagued by a moral dilemma. In *André*, Dunlap's portrayal of Washington is particularly well balanced in that "he gives Washington a more natural vocabulary than is usually allotted on stage to the Father of the Country" (Quinn 87). The praise in *The Glory of Columbia* seems more in keeping with similar discussions of General Washington early in the century. Dunlap himself had on occasion shouted Washington's praises dramatically, notably in *Darby's Return* (1789), an interlude that Washington had attended and, according to Dunlap's account, was exceedingly embarrassed by the praise. As historian Daniel Boorstin notes, by 1803, the "cult of Washington" was gaining national prominence (340), and Dunlap could praise Washington to the delight of the masses without fear of embarrassing the now deceased president. Washington becomes even more "god-like" with the elimination of much of the more troublesome moments of moral dilemma, which plagued the general and made him seem more human than Washington usually did on stage.

As revealed in the epistolary exchange between "Z" and Dunlap in *The Argus* or *Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser*, apparently an additional irritant to the patriotic audience was the absence of André's captors in the earlier play (Philbrick 113). One could argue that Dunlap was more than fair in his verbal

depiction of the men, having André himself praise their patriotism. However, as Philbrick suggests, Bland's suggestion that André should have run his sword through the three might have added additional fuel to the patriotic fire against the play (116). In *The Glory of Columbia*, Dunlap not only rectifies the omission by including the three, but also has André praise them to their faces:

Tis well: you have taught me to reverence an american [*sic*] farmer. You have given me a convincing proof, that it is not high attainments, or distinguished rank, which ensure virtue, but rather early habits and moderate desires. You have not only captured—you have *conquered* me.... While I live I shall always pronounce the names of Williams, Paulding, and Van Vert, with that tribute of praise which virtue forces from every heart, that cherishes her image. (99, original emphasis).

By including the capture, Dunlap further reduces the stature of the spy as a noble character. Even the most generous telling of André's capture demonstrates how ill-equipped he was for his mission. It is hard to portray anyone's version of the events without making André look like a fool: first he says he's a British officer (although one could argue that he was tricked into disclosing that information), and then he says he has a pass from General Arnold. Williams, Paulding, and Van Wart did not need to be intellectual giants to suspect André. Dunlap, rather than mocking André, gives most of the lines to the captors to highlight their patriotic fever and their rustic virtue, forsaking gold in order to do the right thing, thus making any republican audience feel warm all over about the inherent goodness of the lowliest American.

The additional characters seem to have been added for commercial reasons. The Irish character is certainly meant as a crowd pleaser. Several critics have noted he has nearly no function in the plot; however he does function as a counterpoint to Arnold, for he joins the American side without benefit of gold or privileges. He alone represents a multicultural America as a non-English immigrant. Sally also appears to be something of a commercial addition; dressing as a soldier, she shows a bit of leg, which probably added to the take at the box office.¹⁸ Beyond the titillation of a cross-dressing woman, however, Sally also serves to reinforce the maleness of the military, an important point in *André*. Sally dresses in drag because she wants to look at the soldiers despite her brother's warning that a military camp is no place "for petticoats." She

briefly considers joining the army herself, until she remembers an earlier incident when, after firing upon British soldiers who surprised her and her brother, she fainted. Although she managed to “wing” one of them, she remembers that she “was more inclined to cry out than to fight” (100) and concludes, “I hope no one will ever put on the american uniform till well assured they will never disgrace it” and sings a rousing song about the need for only those who would do the uniform proud to serve (100). Williams, seeing “sister Sal” in drag, enlists the help of Paulding and Van Vert to teach her a lesson by accusing her of being a spy and threatening her with his sword. The episode ends merrily as Sally responds wittily to his accusation that she cannot be his sister since he forbade his sister from coming. “Yes!” she says, “you told me it was dangerous for a petticoat, so I left them at home – ‘Petticoats at home’ ha, brother” (101). Relenting, he tells her to take care of the farm and family, and as her reward for promising to do so he’ll let her see the parade.

While the exclusion of women from active roles in this spy story may not seem worthy of extensive comment, Dunlap’s emphasis on the maleness of the military is only the first example of the self-conscious exclusion of women from much of the genre and the rewriting of the public perception of the military which erases the women who served as camp followers (*de facto* cooks, tailors, and maids and countless other jobs required for the well being of the army), stand-in soldiers, and spies. The women in both *André* and *The Glory of Columbia* represent the world that Bland, as a young leader, must renounce in his journey toward manhood, as well as the dependent members of the nation whom, like Sally, the yeomen must protect. Patriotic women, like Sally, cheer the troops from the sidelines to the apparent delight of the box office.¹⁹ Honora’s madness demonstrates André’s failure to protect his honor and his dependent. Not only does this failure demonstrate André’s failure as a man, it reasserts the Americans’ masculine superiority as their women, both Sally and Mrs. Bland, are protected and satisfied. It also emphasizes the Revolution as a battle for power between equals: white men. By depicting the Revolution as a battle between equals, Dunlap erases the colonizing differences the British used to justify their governance over the Americas. In fact, through Irish Dennis’s defection, the Americans attract subjects of other British colonies.

Despite Dunlap’s dismissal of Burk’s excessive patriotism in *Bunker-Hill*, Burk’s receipts, totaling \$2000 on the first night, demonstrated that such “execrable” displays sold very well (Moody, “Introduction

to *Bunker Hill*" 61). Apparently patriotism worked well for Dunlap as well. Although not the phenomenal success that Burk's play was in Boston when it first opened, *The Glory of Columbia* opened to a box office of \$1,287, and remained in the repertory of the Park for some fifty years, although as Moody notes, most of its performances fell on the Fourth of July or Evacuation Day (90). Dunlap's remaking of *André* into *The Glory of Columbia!* not only turns the play into a commercial venture, it also becomes a more republican enterprise, perhaps reflecting the change in the presidential administration since the first version. The rustic farmer/militia men are the heroes of the play, not the well-to-do André. Dennis O'Bogg's defection from the British army puts a slight anti-British spin on the play. Although issues of how decisions are made, and the toll they take on the decision maker are illustrated through Washington's patient hearing of Bland, the British officer, and Honora's letters, the play takes less time to instruct Bland in his duties as a future leader than to demonstrate Washington at his rational, compassionate best. In any case, most of the decision making gets lost between the singing and antics of the militiamen. Theater historian David Grimsted suggests that in production, especially during the holiday productions, these scenes may have been cut even farther (18).

In a reverse of *André*'s reception, twentieth-century critics generally pan the play; Coad calls it "a disjointed hodge-podge, sugar-coated, with copious quantities of patriotism" (*William Dunlap* 173). One could argue that Dunlap's heart was not in this play. However, without getting into a discussion of twentieth-century tastes versus those of the early nineteenth century, one should note that the "serious" drama of *André* failed for many reasons while the comic *Glory of Columbia* presented itself respectably at the box office. Although other spy plays appeared after *André*, no one attempted another theatrical version of the story until Joseph Breck wrote *West Point; or A Tale of Treason* in 1840, loosely based on J. H. Ingraham's novel, *Arnold!; or The British Spy*, and there is no confirmed professional staging of the story until Clyde Fitch's *Major André* in 1903, well beyond the scope of this study.²⁰ As a "spy play," *The Glory of Columbia* focuses on the spy catchers, a move which improved the popularity of the play, but does little to advance the heroism of the spy. That would come later with fuller explorations of André as the heroic victim of the truly villainous Arnold later works would depict.

Dunlap's refashioning of the play was more consistent with earlier presentations in "popular" ballads which celebrated the working-class heroes rather than the professional-class British André and shifted the perception of honor from the chivalric codes of British officer spies to those ordinary Americans who defended against foreign spies. "The Death of Major André," a ballad broadside published in 1780, sings the praises of "John Spaulding" [*sic*] for capturing (apparently single-handedly) André. Spaulding first appears as a former prisoner of war who managed to escape, and then, resisting the temptation of riches, foils the evil Arnold's plot. André is briefly mourned in one stanza of the ten stanza song:

When he was executed he being both meek and mild,
Around on the spectators most pleasantly did smile.
It [?] fill'd each with terror and caus'd their hearts to bleed,
They wished that André was set free and Arnold in his stead.

Despite this stanza, and the illustration of a hanging man attended by a clergyman and a Continental soldier, the song is clearly a joyous one as it begins: "Come all you brave Americans I pray you lend an ear/I will sing you a short ditty your spirits for to cheer." The song also closes on an up note:

Success unto John Spaulding, let his health be drank around
Likewise to those brave heroes who fought against the crown
Here is a health to every Soldier who fought for liberty,
And to the brave and gallant Washington of North America

While the quality of the verse may explain why this song did not do for John Paulding what Longfellow's poem did for Paul Revere, certainly class and political reasons could explain the difference as well. Revere, an established artisan with a long history of patriotic activity, stood as an impeccable candidate for national hero (even if he did not perform all of the spy mission that Longfellow claimed for him) while Paulding, a humble farmer whose motives came up for question every few years, could claim a few statues in New York State, and a county in Ohio as his legacy, but not much more. Authorship also contributed. Anonymous ballads rarely attained the cultural currency of the works of established authors.

Another enlisted hero connected to the scandal was also celebrated in song. Sergeant Major Champe who, on assignment from General Washington, pretended to defect in order to attempt to kidnap Arnold stars as the subject of a ballad which also mentions André, who died before Champe begins his mission, although with a certain irony about his fame. The song ends:

Base Arnold's head, by luck, was sav'd

Poor André was gibbeted,

Arnold's to blame for André's fame,

And André's to be pitied.

In the popular ballads and songs, it appears that Williams, Paulding, and Van Wart, and to a lesser extent, Champe, represent the working class heroes who thwart Arnold's pernicious plan. André, diminished from his usual heroic stature, dies as a result of Arnold's villainy. Dunlap's original play attempted to find a bourgeois hero, but André as hero complicates national loyalties and questions of who qualify as heroes. André as pathetic victim allows sympathy for his noble qualities, but does not complicate American values since America triumphs as André perishes. America's defenders, the intrepid spy catchers, earn her praises.

That *André* failed does not mean that André as a topic was passé in all forms of literature. To the contrary he inspired novels, other plays, portions of histories, as well as much heated debate in the newspapers and journals of the period, for at least the next fifty years. It may seem remarkable that a single incident could cause such passions for so long, but André actually resurfaced as news several times in the early nineteenth century. Arnold's death in 1801 revived the story in the public's mind. In 1808, twenty-eight years after André's execution, Joshua Hett Smith, André's occasional guide, published his *Narrative of the Death of Major André* in which he denies any negligence in his duties as escort to André (Smith was widely blamed for abandoning André to the captors), and expresses his indignation at his treatment by the Americans. In 1817, one of the three men who caught André petitioned the government for an additional pension, much to the ire of the now Congressman Benjamin Tallmadge, resulting in much spirited debate on and off the floor of the House of Representatives, and the publication of Egbert Benson's *The Vindication of the Captors of Major André*. In 1821, over forty years after his execution, André's remains were moved to

England where, with Aphra Behn, he is one of only two acknowledged spies buried in Westminster Abbey. One would think that the removal of his remains would end the story, but in 1827 the city of New York considered erecting a monument to the memory of John Paulding and in 1853, the city of Tarrytown erected their own monument to the three captors on the site of the arrest. Of course the American centennial celebration in 1876 and the centennial celebration of the capture in 1880 revived interest yet again.

On the other hand, the literary presentations of André are by no means uniform. They vary between the “strictly historical” and the romantic tales of the dashing young man who dies before his time. Despite local differences due to genre or the author’s “spin” on the tale, typically, André does not appear alone, removed from the context of Arnold and/or Washington; and by and large, the longer works—novels, plays, and dramatic poems—generally portray André complementarily, as do most of the histories that discuss the incident in any detail. In these, Robert D. Arner suggests, André becomes a timeless “male fantasy figure, not only for an age attuned to Addison’s *Cato* but also for an age reared on Hemingway’s code hero or, however reluctantly, on the exploits of John Wayne”(62).²¹ The longer non-fictional works, and often include both “literary” and “non-literary” additional texts, also blur the line between truth and fiction, fact and opinion. Even *The Vindication of the Captors of André* is far more complimentary to André than to Tallmadge. Indeed, in some of these works, the lines between British and American blur as well: for example, several editions of Dunlap’s *André* included Seward’s “Monody” or André’s poem “The Cow Chase,” as well as the three letters André wrote to Seward in 1769 which she appended to her monody. It is difficult, as well, to determine whether Joshua Smith, André’s erstwhile escort, writes to an American audience or a British one; his narrative was published in both London and New York multiple times.

From Federalist Tragic Hero to Hapless Seduction Victim

But even those works presented as purely “American” can cause one to question where sympathies lie. For example, Dunlap’s *André* ends with a hope that the future generations of England and America can put the conflict behind them:

The race who plan’d

Who acquiesced, or did the deeds abhor'd,
 Has pass'd from off the earth; and, in its stead,
 Stand men who challenge love or detestation
 But from their proper, individual deeds.
 Never let memory of the sire's offence
 Descend upon the son.

In Dunlap's case, however, this speech probably expresses his Federalist politics. In 1798, reconciliation with England surfaced as a popular position among the Federalists who feared the excesses of the French Revolution and preferred the lopsided trade balance with England. Not everyone, however, was a Federalist, which may explain the play's icy reception. Relations with the motherland were not as smooth as they could be, and in fourteen years America would again find itself at war with England. Partisan rancor between the Adams Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans was quite high, especially over the foreign relations of the new nation with France and England. The eight-year long war itself was still fresh in people's minds, as Dunlap himself suggested it might be in his preface. Arguing that André, a British officer whose crime, had it succeeded, would have decided the war in favor of Britain, should be spared, even if only through the voice of a single misguided character, could be sure to rankle someone in a "mixed assembly" who could not understand, Dunlap writes in his *History of the Theatre*, since "[they] thought the country and its defenders insulted" (2:20).

Aside from the desire for reconciliation with Britain, Dunlap's Federalism comes forth in the central argument of the play: who is fit to lead the country and how must those decisions be made. Dunlap's model for the public sphere, the military camp, reflects a particularly Federalist conception of government: hierarchical, structured, paternalistic, and decidedly male. Ultimately, decisions rest with those at top. The general, a benevolent man to be sure, does not run a democratic unit. He listens politely to those who come to argue on behalf of André, but rejects their input, occasionally explaining why he must act as he plans. Decisions should not be made by emotion (a fear of many who distrusted the democratic "mobs"), but by informed reason balanced by compassion, a model provided by Washington. The women, too emotional to

be even let into the public sphere, and Bland, too young to understand the necessity of subverting private desire to public duty, must cede to the wisdom of the General. Bland, with time, will gain the maturity and wisdom to understand and make such decisions himself—indeed he begins to learn by the end of the play. The common soldier, esteemed by the general, is also protected by him, as he watches over “the weary soldier [who] lies/The sweet reward of wholesome toil enjoying” (518). The common soldier, however, never even makes it on stage.

In some ways, André was a Federalist hero and his tragedy a Federalist tragedy. Not that he advanced the cause of the Federalists, or even knew what Federalism was when he died, but that he represented the sort of person his supporters would have wanted in their party had he been American. Among his early supporters, eulogizers, and biographers were leading lights in the Federalist movement. Hamilton and Tallmadge were noted Federalist politicians in the new government. Dunlap, progressive enough to be a Whig, but not quite progressive enough to be a Republican, leaned heavily toward the Federalists. Joel Barlow, who wrote a moving letter describing the execution while a chaplain in the war, was a politically conservative Connecticut Wit prior to his adventures in Europe. Sparks and Marshall, who portrayed André sympathetically in their biographies of Washington, also subscribed to socially conservative notions of meritocracy. James Fenimore Cooper, who would draw upon André’s tale for his own novel *The Spy* (1821), was raised in a Federalist household (Taylor 6), although his representation of spying in general and André in particular are considerably more complicated. In *Notions of the Americans*, Cooper meditates on André’s possible options for escape at the hands of his captors, concluding that lying would have been best: “By assuming the character of an American, he would clearly have been safest, let his captors prove to be what they would, since, if enemies it might have lulled their suspicions or if friends they would have at most conducted him to the British camp, the very spot he was risking his life to gain”(180).²² Catharine Sedgwick, whose *The Linwoods* (1835) derives not only from *The Spy*, but also from André’s adventures, came from a Federalist background as well.

One could argue that spying better fits within a Federalist viewpoint since it assumes that some people have more “need to know” (to use a common phrase in American intelligence circles) than others and

that successful spy networks rely on some sort of consolidation of power and decision making, more closely related both to the military and Federalist models of governance. A purely democratic perspective would assume that everyone should have a right to know. Beyond the inherently Federalist bent to military spying, André was the perfect Federalist hero. Well-bred, handsome, refined, and doing very well in the army, André seemed a world apart from the ruffians who captured him, and from the boorish, overbearing Arnold who probably acquired his money (before he spent it all) illegally through smuggling, as Warren notes in her history (2:258).

Certainly class as well as politics played a role in the lines drawn between the admirers of André and those who supported his captors. Partisan politics and class distinctions surfaced with David William's petition for more pension in 1817 when Representative Tallmadge all but calls the three captors "thieves" during the Congressional debates on the petition. Hiding behind the injustice of one man receiving so much for doing his duty for the country while so many have received so little, Tallmadge attacks the three in classist terms: "These persons, indeed, he [Tallmadge] said, were of that class of people who passed between both armies; as often in one camp as the other, and whom, had he met with them, he should probably as soon have apprehended as Major André, as he had always made it a rule to do with these suspicious persons" (*Congressional Record*, qtd in Benson 11). Barent Gardenier, editor of the *New York Courier*, rebutted Tallmadge's attack for its elitist nature:

[He] ventured to ascribe to the celebrated captors of André, a character most infamous and detestable; and to their conduct, on that occasion, motives the most sordid and odious....Col. Tallmadge has endeavored to tear the fairest leaf from our history, and to deprive the yeomenry of our country a theme in which they gloried, and of an example, whose influence is not less extensive and important, than was that of the immortal William Tell....[I]f he has done so upon slight, upon very slight grounds; not from his own knowledge, but from the calumnies of the envious, and the mere suspicions of an enemy, he has incurred a responsibility which he must meet [to prove the charges before uttering them]. (qtd. in Benson 13-4)

Gardenier was not the only newspaperman to question the attention lavished on André and Tallmadge's disparagement of his captors. Both *The American Register* and *Niles' Weekly Register* ran similar editorials chastising Tallmadge, and *Niles* urged that more attention be paid to Nathan Hale. On 23 November, 1816, *Niles* made a particularly pointed attack on "Andrémania."

André was engaged in as foul a treason as the history of nations record—he was in every way transgressing the public law—and, had he succeeded, our nation and name, just then rising into view, might have been blotted out forever.... Yet there is a multitude among us—men and women, exulting in the freedom and consequent prosperity of their country, who have a species of desire that he, who had suffered himself to be made an instrument to bring about the death of thousands—possibly, to have brought WASHINGTON himself to the gallows, to escape death! (198)

The War of 1812 had refocused attention on our relationship with England and English spies throughout the 1810s and the 1820s as newspapers monitored the actions of "Clark the Spy," and "Edwards the Spy" (accused of plotting to assassinate the entire House of Commons) who, *Niles* implied with some paranoia, might be sent to the United States (18: 310). Although the Federalists controlled the White House at the time of Tallmadge's attack on the three captors, their influence was beginning to fade and André became a more difficult memory to preserve as an ideal. Tallmadge's questioning of the sincerity of Paulding, Williams and Van Wart rapidly dwindled into the minority view.

André was easier to support as a victim than as a hero. Although not a single one of the chroniclers would label the death sentence unjust, some imagine what if: Tallmadge hadn't come back when he did, or Smith actually rowed André to the Vulture, or at least accompanied him all the way to New York, or André had followed Clinton's advice. Of course the answer would be that, in addition to André's not being hanged, Arnold would have turned over West Point, and thus the war, to the British, a prospect too frightening to consider. Robert Arner suggests that the fatalistic "what ifs" prove that the Divine Hand of God influenced this American experiment: "thus André, for all that he was on the other side, ends up validating a cherished concept as old on American soil as the Pilgrim Fathers: that we are a people especially marked out for divine

protection and guidance" (55). André becomes the sacrificial lamb whose death enables Americans to be free. Certainly this reading could explain not only the continued popularity of the story, as appropriately placed within its historical context as the lucky exposure of Arnold's scheme, but also the total acceptance of the inevitability of André's execution.

Although André may be an ideal would-be Federalist in his depiction by his friends, his attempt to gain information to use in what would have been a devastating attack on an American fort means that he cannot stand alone as a hero. As fewer people remembered André the man, rather than the legend, he had to metamorphose into something other than a polished gentleman. In order to be heroic, tragic, or even sympathetic, he must be seen in opposition to Benedict Arnold, a traitor so villainous even the British didn't like him, or as a tool to demonstrate Washington's innate sense of justice. The latter strategy translated into a quick mention of the incident as shorthand for Washington's justice, as Murray does, or Susan Warner, in 1850, with little Ellen Montgomery's assertion in *The Wide, Wide World* that André's execution must have been right: "If it had not been right, Washington would not have done it" (536). As the reception of Dunlap's play demonstrates, it could not, however, sustain a full length work with credibility.

Despite, or because of, the discussion of André in the popular press during and after the War of 1812, into the 1820s, André rarely appeared as a literary character during that time, although he figures strongly in the "non-fictional" histories and Cooper's "memoir" of a travelling bachelor, particularly in Letter XII "To the Comte Jules de Béthizy" (173-192). Many of the histories, written by socially conservative authors chose, rather than subverting André's plight in favor of a celebration of his capture, to put André in opposition to Arnold, emphasizing, even more than Dunlap's play, André as surrogate "fallen woman." In the histories of the Revolution and the biographies of Washington and Arnold, André can be firmly contextualized with respect to the villainous Arnold and the saintly Washington.

André does not figure as a major character again until the 1840s, by which time the surviving witnesses would have been well into their sixties at the youngest, but more likely considerably older. Magazine accounts depict the incident as a fascinating bit of American trivia: a "real" romance of the revolution, in which André is both magnified and diminished—magnified as a romantic hero, and diminished

as a real threat to American liberty. The 1845 Currier and Ives print *The Capture of André* depicts a quaint, if not faintly ridiculous, André fully dressed as a British gentleman of 1780 with finely powdered, dressed hair, but missing one boot. The three captors, in long pants and unpowdered, short hair (but for one who wears his loose) and brimmed hats, look considerably more modern than their captive. When compared to Asher B. Durand's 1833 painting, *Capture of Major André*, the print underscores the increasing remoteness of André's tale from daily American life. In Durand's painting, the contrast between André and his captors seems less marked; all four men wear breeches and stockings, and André's hair, although gathered in a simple ponytail, is unpowdered. Durand's André, offering his watch, looks desperate as if fully aware what his detainment means. Currier and Ives's André, in contrast, looks like a bemused folk art character for whom the threat of hanging has no meaning. Nathaniel Parker Willis's poem "André's Request to Washington" (1848)²³ is one of the last literary pieces to address André as heroic on his own terms, and one of the few in which André appears outside his historical context of Arnold or the captors. Willis's poem is the last literary production in which André is heroic without being compared to Arnold. The poem conveys the early attraction of André's story: the regret for misplaced ambition that will result in the loss of one's good name.

Other literary productions of the decade centered on Arnold's role in the conspiracy. Regardless of how one feels about André's role in Arnold's treason, even his harshest newspaper critics admitted that it was a shame that André, by all accounts a good man performing an odious duty, died while Arnold, whom even the British distrusted, went free. The inclusions of Arnold either propelled the story toward a great deal of historical detail as the author explored the motives behind Arnold's defection, or toward utter escapist fantasy. Sometimes, a bit of both slip in.

J. H. Ingraham's *Arnold!; or the British Spy* (1840) is historically accurate in many respects, although it occasionally draws on the stock of popular fiction. He adds a comic black character from the minstrel tradition, and he exploits stereotypes of rustic Yankees for the captors. He depicts the captors harshly, using broad dialect such as, "He's British by his yellor gimcranks... we Yankees are too pesky poor to have sich gear" (17), and ironic epithets like, "he of the long limbs" (16) and "the knight with the

legs”(17) while suggesting subtly that they may not be as virtuous as some histories have presented them. But he quotes freely from many letters, including Jameson’s letter to Arnold, and André’s letter to Washington. His preservation of historical accuracy does not extend to his depiction of Mrs. Arnold.

Margaret “Peggy” Shippen Arnold proved always something of a wild card to the historians of the case since there was little proof that she knew of her husband’s treasonous plans. Most early “literary” accounts left her out. Later, as the story gave way to more sentimental treatment and outright romantic fantasy, she became a favorite character because her prior connection to André in Philadelphia society added a romantic twist. Given the low standards of female intelligence assumed by many male writers of the early nineteenth-century, and the cult of domesticity’s assumption that Woman preserved the morality of a household, many assumed that she must be totally innocent of her husband’s plans, despite the fact that many of the letters between Arnold and André actually went through Peggy who posed as a pen-pal to André. As Miriam Shillingsburg notes, throughout the nineteenth-century, she is “stereotyped innocence, the favorite interpretation of upper class females in nineteenth-century literature” (89). The one possible exception is Ann S. Stephens’s portrayal of Arnold’s young wife, renamed “Isabel,” in her serial *Sir Henry’s Ward*, published in *Graham’s Magazine* in 1846. Although young Isabel falls victim to the nefarious Arnold (who is chased by a woman he ruined earlier), she does not escape blame entirely herself, since she accepted Arnold’s proposal only after discovering that André loves another woman. While she may not deserve the misery heaped upon her by Arnold’s treason, Isabel is a socialite coquette, who dances until dawn, is brazen enough to assume that the honorable André loves her, and petulant enough to rush into marriage as revenge when she learns she’s wrong. In another novel, she would be the classic seduction victim who would be partially responsible for the ill that befell her.

Ingraham, however, is a male writer and makes the typical male assumptions about Mrs. Arnold (in this case, named “Mary”) and her innocence. In a footnote, he informs the reader: “It is a singular fact that André was an admirer of Miss Shippen, afterwards Mrs. Arnold, who was a daughter of Chief Justice Shippen of Philadelphia where he first saw her during its occupancy by the British army” (18). In the midst

of the letter writing back and forth, Ingraham inserts his own letter from Mary Arnold to André, urging him to escape by following her black servant (19). André, a man of honor, will not escape.

Aside from the plotted escape, Ingraham's novella ends conventionally with André's last words, and a long quote from Spark's biography of Arnold describing André as sentimental victim:

His name is embalmed in every generous heart; and they who will condemn his great error, and applaud the sentence of his judges, will cherish a melancholy remembrance of the unfortunate victim, and grieve that a life of so much promise, adorned with so many elevated and estimable qualities, was destined to an untimely and ignominious end. (24)

Ingraham concludes that the mourning by so many "eminently show how virtue may ennoble even the gallows," an end preferable to the "life of scorn and contempt of mankind" of Benedict Arnold (24).

The story furthers the "André as sentimental victim" version of the tale, but its primary contribution to the Arnold/André oeuvre rests in the blatantly fictional romanticism of the tale. Joseph Breck's dramatization of Ingraham's tale, *West Point; or a Tale of Treason*, adds still further to the story as melodrama. André appears initially less heroic and haughtier in the play, although still the apple of Mrs. Arnold's eye. Of course, he redeems himself in his bravery facing death. To further Arnold's villainy, Breck has him murder Smithson, the Smith stand-in, who is portrayed far more kindly than history would suggest Smith deserved. Breck also makes Major Charles Talmadge [*sic*] a romantic lead, saving his lady love, Adelaide, a friend of Mrs. Arnold's, from suffering a similar fate to that of Smithson, now dead, from Arnold. Arnold, as determined by history, apparently gets away, although neither Talmadge nor his friend Hamilton mentions what happens to Arnold. The play closes with André's standard last words and an absolution of Washington from guilt: "I absolve from all malice that great man, George Washington. Should my death happily be the means of adjusting the difficulty that exists between this country and my native land, I trust none will regret the sacrifice which is demanded by the stern dictates of war" (21). In a remarkable shift of responsibility for the execution, André becomes a martyr for the American cause. For the readers of the printed play, Breck concludes, "Whilst the spectators, soldiers, and all present, evinced emotions of regret that 'the stern dictates of war' demanded the hanging of the 'Spy,' no one shed a more sympathising

tear than WASHINGTON," despite Washington's absence from the play, preserving Washington's position as both André's judge and his greatest mourner.

There are many ways to melodramatize history. Other writers made use of the image of André as the dashing handsome, romantic young man whose mere presence could cause women to fall in love with him. As we have seen briefly, this is the strategy Ann S. Stephens uses. Beyond the André-as-love-object plot line and its spunky Mrs. Arnold, Stephens adds Sir Henry Clinton, Arnold's wronged lover Laura, her money-lending brother Paul, and André's fiancée, Delia (the name is probably drawn from André's verses to Rebecca Redman, in which he calls her "Delia"²⁴), disguised as her twin brother James in a fantastic outfit of a brilliant blue coat with long skirts. The whole collection, with the exception of André, Delia, and Sir Henry, are a miserable lot who are partially redeemed in sentimental fashion. Laura Longtree, Arnold's former lover, escapes to a convent in Canada. Paul Longtree, her usurer brother, is allowed recovery, for the sight of Arnold betraying his country turns Paul into an ardent patriot. Arnold and Mrs. Arnold endure a miserable existence in London. Increasing the pathos, both Delia and her twin brother die of tuberculosis within a year of André's execution.

Stephens's version demonstrates the flexibility of the story as background for a romance, but also presents a feminine viewpoint. Stephens uses not only places historical characters in an unabashedly fictional tale, but she also avoids presenting the one scene most writers agree on: André's death.

I cannot follow that brave young man to his ignominious execution. I will not point him to my readers, standing upon that death cart, haltered to the gallows tree, with a whole army gazing upon his death struggles, and a whole multitude weeping for him. In doing this, I might be urged to question the necessity, not of his death, terrible as it seemed, but of the ignominy that gave bitterness to his death. (275)

By claiming to avoid this scene (she actually describes in detail what she "won't" tell us), she subtly questions the necessity of hanging André, as did Mercy Otis Warren, in her history. Warren unstintingly praises André as "a young gentleman, whose life had been unimpeached, and whose character promised a distinguished rank in society, both as a man of letters and a soldier. He was elegant in person, amiable in

manners, polite, sensible, and brave" (2:264). But, she notes, "from a misguided zeal for the service of his king, he descended to a an assumed and disgraceful character." She equally unstintingly disapproves of spying as "a business to which so much deception and baseness is attached" and blames both Washington and Clinton as "equally culpable" for employing spies in the first place, causing "some of their bravest and most confidential officers to wear a guise, in which, if detected, they are at once subjected to infamy and the halter" (2:265). Although she preserves some sympathy for André, as the young man who fell to infamy as a result of "the indiscretion and baseness of his untried friend [Arnold]" (2:264), she clearly finds the entire business distasteful and the sentence far too severe: "Many persons, from the impulse of humanity, thought that General Washington might, consistently with his character as a soldier and a patriot, have meliorated the sentence of death so far, as to have saved, at his own earnest request, this amiable young man from the ignominy of a gallows by permitting him to die in a mode more consonant to the idea of the brave, the honorable, and the virtuous" (2:269). The *Ladies Afternoon Visitor* in 1806 similarly questioned the rigidity of the sentence,

Could the rigid maxims of military discipline, have been somewhat relaxed, or the harsh mode of putting the unhappy young man to death, have been altered or softened in some of its odious formalities, which in his last hour mortified him more fervently than his loss of life, the cause of liberty could not possibly have been injured, and such conduct would have done credit to the finer feelings of the transatlantic generals, in which, by the voice of party malevolence, or of truth, they are accused of having been grossly deficient. (5)

Few male writers questioned the necessity of the hanging after it had happened (both Tallmadge and Hamilton had petitioned Washington to honor André's request, but wrote of its necessity later). In fact, several go to great pains to explain why André must hang. Certainly there could be many reasons why individual writers would question the wisdom of hanging André, but the fact that the few women who wrote about the incident should all question the method of execution suggests a gendered response to the sentence. No doubt some of the male writers would offer their own explanations for the phenomenon: Dunlap would probably say that it proves how little women knew about the rules of military justice, and Tallmadge might

suggest (Winthrop Sargent intimates in his biography of André) it proves his hypothesis that if women composed the court martial André would have been declared innocent, because he would have charmed the whole board (Sargent 414).

I suspect that the reason may lie in more than women's exclusion from warfare, the feminine coding of pacifism, or André's masculine charms. In André's story, especially as told and retold as a tale of a charming young man who, because of his ambition and his naiveté, is seduced into donning the garb of a spy and is caught while his nefarious seducer, Benedict Arnold, escapes to command again, perhaps the women see, more readily than the men, the classic seduction tale formula. Andrémania is not dissimilar to the national mourning of Charlotte Temple, the fictional creation of Susanna Rowson. Charlotte, betrayed into losing her virtue, on the promise of honorable marriage later, is "caught" when her pregnancy reveals her status as a non-virgin. A fallen woman, she dies while her seducer marries a wealthy virtuous woman. André's tale is continually coded as a gradual betrayal until his loss of honor, like Charlotte's loss of virtue, is too apparent to ignore—in this case, it is not a pregnancy that reveals his activity, but unwanted papers forced upon him by Arnold. This coding of the tale ignores the probable result had André made his way back to the British side: he would have been declared a hero and the British would have taken West Point. As a seduction tale, André's story provides a tangible victim of the most infamous of American traitors to act as surrogate to the real victim: trust. Likewise, painting Arnold as an avaricious villain who seduces honest young men to commit nefarious deeds, America gains a scapegoat for the execution of André. With André's death, we can enjoy a cathartic cry, but ultimately feel good, because America and honor triumph. Just as Charlotte must die by the conventions of sentimental fiction, André must die by the same conventions as a man without honor. For female audiences, that he dies is enough. For male audiences, the punishment must replicate the horror of the crime to demonstrate the fierceness of justice and to provide the ritual reestablishment of the national sovereignty.

Just as early popular depictions of the tale emphasized the spy catchers over the spy, as the noble, pathetic, and honorable spy no longer met their national needs, by the 1850s, authors of literary versions of the story took greater pains to examine the motivations of Arnold, perhaps as a way of understanding the

psychology of a traitor. By examining why he defected, they could warn others of the dangers from the perpetrator's side rather than the victim's. Once the nation was established and the nation recovered from Arnold's specific treason, the potential for future national betrayal provided more interest than the past victimization of the nation's trust. Although the traitor could not be considered honorable in the way that the spy might, by examining Arnold as the psychological profile of a traitor, the authors depicted Arnold as a type who could appear again in history, rather than an isolated aberration who impacted one pathetic victim. Ingraham, Breck and Stephens represent the melodramatization of the story in the 1840s from the viewpoint of André. A decade later, other writers, typically those who would probably have considered themselves more "high-brow" than Stephen, attempted to honor history more rigorously, concentrating on Arnold's story, yet even they demonstrated flights of improbable fancy. Elihu G. Holland, J.R. Orton, and William Wilberforce Lord all wrote closet verse dramas of the story. The closet drama, as Holland acknowledges, allowed for longer speeches and philosophical digressions (243). It also allowed for wild shifts in time, as Orton exploited it to cover the high and low points of Arnold's career as a means to understanding the motives for his treason. Lord notes the challenges of dramatic verse: "The difficulty of poetic representation, in regard to the most moving and tragical event in our National history, lies mainly in adapting modern and natural language to the necessities of verse, and to preconceived notions of tragic style" (i). One wonders if the playwrights' choice of "closet drama" also reflected growing prejudice against the theatre as a place of lowbrow entertainment during the mid-century.²⁵ All three suggest a certain solemnity about their works, including Holland's fantastic Sorceress whom Holland introduces to tie Arnold's fate to Macbeth. For each, a full account of Arnold's story and a way to explain it are much more important than actability or even readability. Each features extended cast lists. Orton attempts to understand the tale by reconstructing Arnold's entire history to trace the growing resentment which must have led him to treason. Lord examines the effect of Arnold's treason on the other American officers, notably Arnold's aides, Franks and Varick, both of whom were declared innocent by the court martial, but were terribly disturbed by Arnold's action. The play ends with Franks arranging to be captured so he can confront Arnold and tell him just what he thinks:

But you have robbed me of my trust in manhood.

Undoubting I leaned upon your honor—

With my whole soul. It broke and wounded me,

And I shall halt even to my grave, and find

No second man that I can lean upon. (136-137)

Holland attempts to explain the event as if a Shakespearean tragedy of a man undone by ambition. He uses a Sorceress like Macbeth's weird sisters to predict Arnold's fate. The play closes with Arnold's mad ranting of doing battle before he falls and dies. The sympathetic depiction of André gave the spy an honor not seen before, and the psychological probing of Arnold, especially in these later plays, illustrated that not only did one man impact history but, given the proper circumstances, treason could occur again. This possibility opens the door to stories of future acts of treason and future spies.

Captain Nathan Hale: The Captivity Tale of an American Martyr

At about the same time that André's story was losing relevance for the nation, the cry for attention to Nathan Hale's story began to grow louder. Poet Timothy Dwight's incongruous mention of Hale (who had been his student at Yale) and André in book I of *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785)²⁶ and Hannah Adams's *Summary History of New England* in 1799 were the first printed versions of Hale's story. Although he surfaced occasionally in the histories of the period (usually as an afternote to André's tale), it was not until the 1840s that he became a subject for literary consideration on his own. James Stauton Babcock's modest sixteen-page *Memoir of Captain Nathan Hale* began the trend in 1844. In 1845, David Trumbull published his play *The Death of Captain Nathan Hale* to raise funds for a monument to Hale. Jephtha Root Simms published his novelized version of Hale's tale, *The American Spy*, in 1846. In 1856, Isaac William Stuart published the first lengthy biography of Hale, *Life of Captain Nathan Hale, the Martyr Spy of the American Revolution*. John McMullen's poetic address, "Nathan Hale," to the Alumni Association of Columbia College in October, 1858, represents just one instance of the presentation of Hale as an inspirational figure of patriotism for the mid-nineteenth century.

Unlike André, Hale rarely appears in literature. Aside from this literary production in the 1840s and 1850s, Hale does not circulate as a primary character, and even these publications were quite limited. David Trumbull's play, written to raise money for the Hale memorial fund, had a very limited run. Stuart's biography was published only once. Simms's novel, a short "story paper" publication of flimsy paper had a wider circulation, but only a slightly longer lasting impression. McMullen's poem was reprinted once, in 1859, but has otherwise faded from memory. Otherwise, the Hale bibliography is limited to addresses made at the dedications of various memorials around Connecticut, and addenda to some works describing André. It in no way rivals the body of "Andrémania" that circulated through the nineteenth century.

In many ways this lack of interest in Hale is puzzling. Not only was Hale an American, but his story is even more pathetic than André's. Unlike the extended (and relatively luxurious) imprisonment and focused attention on André's trial and execution, Hale, in contrast, was executed the morning after he confessed to being a spy. There was no trial, and hence no proceedings. The only witnesses were some of Howe's men. Allegedly, the letters wrote to his brother and friends were destroyed by the British, so there exists no documentation of his thoughts or views of the last days of his life. His last words, reported by a British observer to his friend have been the subject of much critical skepticism, in part because of their resemblance to a line in the play *Cato* (a favorite play of the Americans, including General Washington): "what a pity is it/ That we can die but once to serve our country!" (IV iv). Until Hannah Adams's *History*, Hale's history was preserved orally and thus approaches the realm of folktale. Even Adams's story derived from an oral source; she credits her story to Major General William Hull who had been a schoolmate of Hale (357-361).

The son of a Connecticut deacon, Hale attended Yale and was graduated in 1773 at the age of eighteen along with many notables in American history including Benjamin Tallmadge. Rather than enter the clergy, Hale took a teaching position in New London, Connecticut. When the war broke out in Massachusetts, he formed a militia company and received a commission as a lieutenant. He joined Lieutenant Colonel Knowlton's Rangers, where he distinguished himself by capturing a British ship while most of its crew slept. This action demonstrated a certain flair for clandestine work, and may suggest that the

challenges of spying intrigued him when the opportunity presented itself. The American retreat from Long Island to Manhattan presented such an opportunity. Washington, a firm believer in the importance of gathering information, asked Knowlton to find a volunteer for a secret expedition to gain information about the British position. Legend has it that Knowlton approached several officers; only Hale volunteered to go.²⁷

Hale decided to go in the guise of a school teacher, his most recent occupation, and brought along his diploma from Yale as credentials. Dressed in a brown suit, he attempted to blend in and gather information. Soon after he had landed on Long Island, on 15 September 1776, the British seized Manhattan, pushing the Americans toward Harlem. Although his original mission, getting information about British positions on Long Island, no longer carried the same urgency, Hale stayed behind enemy lines making drawings of enemy fortifications and troop dispositions. He was attempting to get back to the American lines when he was captured. The various versions of his capture are more traceable to oral tradition than to documented history. One version has it that his cousin, Samuel Hale, a Tory member of the British army, recognized him. This version is generally discredited since Samuel Hale was actually in Canada at the time. Another version has it that Hale was recognized in the Tory alehouse run by the Widow Chichester, often known as "Mother Chich." This story has a certain amount of credibility since Hale, a tall man disfigured by an exploding powder accident, was probably the sort of person one did not forget after seeing him once. And still another version has it that he mistook a British boat for the American boat scheduled to pick him up. In any case, he was caught with papers describing British fortification (in Latin) in the soles of his shoes, and he freely confessed to Sir William Howe that he was a Continental officer. Since he had confessed and the evidence was present, Howe determined that there was no need for a trial, and sentenced him to hang the next morning, on 22 September, 1776.

The details of his short imprisonment are as sketchy as those of his mission and his capture, but, as later reported by a British officer to Hull, Hale was under the guard of Provost Marshal William Cunningham, a notorious British jailer who denied him both a clergyman and a Bible, and initially denied him paper to write letters. When a lieutenant under Cunningham smuggled in paper, Cunningham allegedly

destroyed the letters Hale had written. When asked if he had any last words, Hale reportedly said, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

The mid-nineteenth-century relative flurry of publications about Hale may have comprised part of a larger trend that Boorstin notes of the secular canonization of regional heroes of the Revolution into national heroes (356-362). Still Hale's story never attracted national attention in the way that André's had, and most versions of Hale's story end with the observation that there existed no Hale memorial until 1847, a fact which provided the impetus for both Trumbull's play and Simms's novel. Simms had noted in 1845, in *The Frontiersmen of New York*, that Hale was "not sufficiently well-known to the reader" as reason enough to repeat his story (725-6). Even now, after two centennial celebrations, Hale's legacy seems meager compared to many other heroes of the war. Aside from a statue outside the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, most monuments to Hale are in Connecticut, in addition to a scattering of schools throughout the country whose school boards may have been influenced by Hale's occupation as a school teacher.

Certainly Hale could play the role of sentimental hero as easily, if not more so, than André. On the surface, he seems like the ideal martyr for the American Revolution; bright, attractive, the pious son of a deacon, and hard working, Hale seems to epitomize all the qualities Americans demanded from heroes. The prior circulation of André's tale removed some of the stigma attached to spying, so why didn't Hale become the same sort of household name that André did? Why didn't American characters chastise British characters for executing Hale in the same way that the British would question Americans about André in American novels later in the century?

The primary reason may involve the limited utility of martyrs in national identification. The importance of a martyr increases over the period of time a nation attempts to liberate itself from the colonizing power. Certainly martyrs play a huge role in Irish literature, but when one considers that struggles for Irish independence from English rule began at least two hundred years before the formation of the Irish Republic, one can see why so many martyrs died for the cause of independence. Likewise, the Boston Massacre served an important role in galvanizing American resentment to British troops quartered on American soil. By the time Hale was executed, the war was already well underway. He served a role in

galvanizing forces through popular ballads sung by the troops, but he was merely one of many who died at British hands as a result of the war. By the time Hale's story surfaced in literary publication, the Americans had won the war. Hale was a martyr to liberty, but America no longer needed martyrs.

One only needed to make a short leap from martyr to captivity narrative in Hale's story, and the leap linked the captivity narrative to the spy story. The captivity and the privations Hale suffered are often the focal point of the telling of the story, both in histories and in fiction. In her *History*, Adams uses little of the space she dedicates to Hale on his mission, dispatching it with the quick sentence: "He passed in disguise to Long Island, examined every part of the British army, and, obtaining the best possible information respecting their situation and future operations" (358). To his captivity, however, she lavishes great attention, detail and editorial comment:

Sir William Howe at once gave an order to the provost marshal to execute him the next morning. This order was executed in a most unfeeling manner, and by as great a savage as ever disgraced humanity. A clergyman, whose attendance he desired, was refused him; a bible for a few moments of devotion was not procured, although he requested it. Letters, which on the morning of his execution he wrote to his mother and other friends, were destroyed; and this very extraordinary reason was given by the provost marshal, 'that the rebels should not know they had a man in their army who could die with so much firmness.' ... Although the manner of the execution will be abhorred by every friend to humanity and religion, yet there cannot be a question but that the sentence was conformable to the rules of war, and the practice of nations in similar cases. (359)

Adams's history was the source for most discussion about Hale that followed. Warren strikes a similar chord in her assessment of Hale as

a young gentleman of unimpeachable character and rising hope, he generously risked his life for the service of his country in the perilous experiment. He ventured into the city, was detected, and with the same frankness and liberality of mind that marked the character of Andre, acknowledged that he was employed in a business that could not be forgiven by his

enemies; and, without the smallest trace of compassion from anyone, he was cruelly insulted, and executed with disgraceful rigor. Nor was he permitted to bid a melancholy adieu to his friends, by conveying letters to inform them of the fatal catastrophe, that presumably robbed them of a beloved son. (266)

Hale often appeared as a contrast to André, in part to show the Americans as fairer judges, but also to demonstrate that the American heroic spy possessed greater heroism than the British spy. It is easy to be brave, the various authors who compared them implied, when buoyed by the support of some of Washington's bravest men. The focus on Hale's deprivation and cheerful forbearance not only served to paint him in a more favorable light than André, they also connect him to the long tradition of captivity narratives, which would be one of Hale's legacies in the development of spy narratives.

Captivity narratives may rank as one of America's oldest "thriller" genres. Cathy N. Davidson includes captivity narratives as one of the oldest American literary "entertainment" (13), and Greg Sieminski notes that they obtained their greatest secular popularity immediately before the Revolution (35). Although the very earliest, like Mary Rowlandson's, circulated as religious texts (despite, as Michelle Burnham has noted, that particular text's emphasis of "not the conversion to spiritual propriety but the relation of a personal history" [13]), the form was adapted to much more secular purposes in the late eighteenth century. For example, Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive* (1797) is as much captivity narrative as picaresque novel. Even before Tyler's narrative, Ethan Allen's *The Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen* (1779), which would provide a model for the many military prisoner of war narratives which followed it, describes his imprisonment by the British during the war, and evokes the language of captivity narratives as he is moved from place to place and made to suffer not only insult but also physical deprivation. Rowlandson's, Tyler's, and Allen's narratives, when taken together, demonstrate the defensive posture of the wronged captive, regardless of whether the captors are Native Americans who act from a desire for retaliation against invasive Anglo settlements, or a threatening foreign nation who act to exhort money from the United States, or the ruling government who imprison wronged citizens. All three represent different points on the colonial/imperialist spectrum, illustrating the flexibility of the captivity narrative as a national narrative.

Richard Slotkin notes that Allen's narrative substitutes patriotism for religious faith as the salve for the battered captive and ascribes to the British "the hellish, devilish nature" most often ascribed to the American Indians (*Regeneration* 251-2). Like André's seduction tale, the patriotic captivity narrative shifts the British to the position of trespassing on America's sovereignty and the rights of her citizens, and provides an even greater reason for American retaliation. Britain, behaving as she does, forfeits her right to consider herself America's legal ruler.

Hale's story raises the stakes of the patriot captivity narrative. Not only are the British savage enough to insult and imprison an American colonel thousands of miles from home (Allen's primary complaint), but they lack "the smallest trace of compassion" (Warren 266). They simultaneously insult connections earthly and spiritual as they violate the sanctity of the family, by destroying Hale's last letters, and religion, by denying him either a clergyman or a Bible. In addition, Hale's execution injects an even greater sense of danger than that usually present in captivity narratives. Although the captives may be threatened with death, or witness the violent deaths of other people, rarely does a captive in such a narrative die. One reason for this fact is that most captivity narratives were written as autobiography; yet many narratives attribute their captives' salvation to a particular strength. Certainly Hale, like other captives, becomes stronger in the face of his adversities, or at least suffers enough to illuminate a strength of character not usually tested. Despite this strength or, in some versions, because of it, he dies. Trumbull's play intimates that had Hale renounced his American commission and joined the British army, Howe would have spared his life, a proposal to which Trumbull has Hale scoff, "Were pardon *sure*, I'd rather die ten times the worst of deaths than save my life an hour upon the terms you offer"(26). Hale suffers, his story implies, because the British do not want "the rebels to know that they had a man in their army who could die with such firmness." Hale dies a martyr to patriotism.

In addition to his martyred captivity, Hale injected a greater heroism into the role of the spy than did André. Although André faced his death with fortitude, many authors noted that Hale's last words bespoke a greater selflessness than André's which intimated a desire for a favorable historical legacy and a certain vanity. In his biography of Hale, Stuart, for one, fiercely asserts Hale's nobler intentions:

The last words of the sufferers—the comparison here is indeed moving and instructive.—“*I pray you to bear me witness,*” said Andre to Colonel Scammel, “*That I meet my fate like a brave man!*”—“*I only regret,*” said Hale, “*that I have but one life to lose for my country!*”—Is it not obvious?—the one was measuring himself in the eyes of men—the other in the eyes of his Maker—the one was thinking of reputation—the other of usefulness—the one of heroism—the other of benefaction—Andre of himself—Hale of his country....[T]he dying moment testifies to Hale’s superior sublimity of character as compared with Andre. (178-9)

Stuart examines the two spies in the mid 1850s when much of André’s charm had faded and his story became a curious tale, but even before authors argued for Hale’s superiority as an honorable man. Hannah Adams had concluded her history with the assessment (copied verbatim by Thacher, and other early historians), “Should a comparison be drawn between Major Andre and Captain Hale, injustice would be done to the latter, should he not be placed on an equal ground with the former” (361), arguing merely that Hale deserved as much attention as André. However, by 18 August 1821, *The Niles Weekly Register*, shifted the emphasis, arguing that “Corruption of officers is always considered dishonorable—but to gain information of the force and disposition of an enemy is not so regarded” (386), making not only one of the first distinctions between Hale’s and André’s activities as “spies,” but also the first suggestion that Hale’s action carried considerably more honor.

Hale is also something André could never be, even in his transformations into a Federalist tragic hero: an All-American hero. A son of a deacon of humble means, he was intelligent and a noted athlete in college. Although he had not married, most longer accounts link him romantically to a woman usually named Alice, based on a young woman, Alice Adams, with whom he corresponded. He is a champion of education for all, progressively advancing the cause of women’s education by teaching girls in special classes before the boys’ classes met. Longer accounts also highlight his piety and his selflessness, including the report that he covered his men’s salaries when Congress fell short of funds. His raid on the British ship demonstrates his ingenuity and leadership, and his reassessment of the intelligence needs of the army after the capture of New York illustrate his independence and fearlessness. To demonstrate his stature as a patriot,

Simms makes Hale the spiritual successor of General Warren, placing him on Bunker's Hill to comfort the American hero and to hear his dying words "My loved—but—injured—country...may—you—be—f—free!" (37). While the later works, most appearing after 1840, to some extent probably reflect the emerging heroic spy in fiction, who began to take shape after Cooper's *The Spy* (1821), Hale also inspired many of the earlier fiction writers as well. He appears in one of the footnotes Cooper added to *The Spy* in 1831: "André was executed amid the tears of his enemies. Hale died unpitied, and with reproaches in his ears; and yet one was the victim of ambition, and the other of devotion to his country. Posterity will do justice between them" (337). To some degree, all of Hale's attributes will emerge in the American literary heroic spies who follow. But Hale's greatest contribution to the honorable, heroic spy was his assertion that any action required in the cause of liberty was honorable. John MacMullen, telling Hale's story in verse to the alumni of Columbia College (later Columbia University, whose buildings had been used as a jail during the Revolution), extends the quote to two stanzas to emphasize its importance, although the first conveys much of its sense:

Our General asks it. Would he ask
 Dishonoring deed or wrong?
 No! and his voice my country's is.
 For her my heart is strong
 To dare a felon's death, or aught
 May help her at her need.
 If we draw back how can we pray
 Our God he cause to speed?

Not only does MacMullen's rendering invoke George Washington's great wisdom and justice, but also his role as parent and symbol of the United States. It also invokes the Puritan conception of America as the chosen land for the chosen people, and hints at the ideology which lies behind Manifest Destiny. Only by pushing forward to defend the country, by any means possible, the passage suggests, can we claim God's support. This sentiment lies behind the actions of all heroic American spies.

Conclusion

Early in the century, Hale's story did not receive nearly the attention that André's did, largely because in and of itself, it could not support the nationalist needs of the emerging nation. André's seduction tale vilified the traitor Arnold, ennobled Washington, and provided a divine stamp of approval on the American Revolution, all while indulging the audience in a good cry. Ultimately, however, André's story lost its appeal for the emerging nation. By 1862, Emily Dickinson suggests in poem 468 that André's alleged tragedy over being hanged rather than shot was the height of self-indulgence:

The Manner of its Death
When Certain it must die—
Seems a privilege to choose—
Twas Major André's Way—

Dickinson's poem suggests a disregard for the conventional trappings of an aristocratic notion of honor which had lent poignancy to André's story. Hale's story, while it could not satisfy the needs of the early nation, seems to have had more staying power. There is nothing uplifting about Hale's execution. He could not pass the information he gathered, so there was no American benefit from his attempt. His is most assuredly not a seduction tale of a man tempted to lose his honor by promises of promotion and glory. Unlike André's tale, Hale's story is neither the cathartic experience of lost honor "justly" punished, nor the patriotic celebration of the destruction of an American enemy. Although many attempted to distinguish Hale as more honorable by carefully pointing out the differences between André's motives and Hale's, this constant referral to André backfires. If the Americans were justified in executing André, wouldn't the British be justified in executing Hale for acting even more undeniably as a spy? Trumbull's play has Howe say words that echo Washington's words in *André* about the necessity of executing a spy, even as his nobility shines forth. History and Provost Marshal Cunningham luckily provide extenuating circumstances to prove that Hale was treated much less fairly than André, but it is difficult to be properly indignant that the British did exactly to one of ours what we did to one of theirs. From an American perspective, no matter which

political party, his death can only be seen as the tragic waste of a promising young life. As a result, it is too depressing a story to tell.

His story did, however, serve an important function for the American spy story. Unlike André, Hale demonstrates that spies can be not only heroic, but also fiercely patriotic. Since there is nothing equivocal in his heroism or his patriotism, he allows for the possibility of selfless spies who sacrifice their reputations and risk their lives for their country. Hale provided a model for future, more successful American spies who would combine family values, selfless patriotism, and fortitude in the face of adversity. Nathan Hale's canonization substitutes the seduction tale, which relies on a human weakness preyed upon by and succumbing to a villain, with the captivity narrative which illuminates a hero's strength in the face of vileness. Although André had validated the postcolonial nascent nation's sovereignty, Hale's legacy, rewritten for success, would carry the nation through its colonizing mission and its Manifest Destiny.

Chapter Three

The Spy Novel: A Historical Romance

Most critics consider Cooper the author of the first spy novel, a title which holds even when one includes novels about André and Hale. However, as I have discussed earlier, there are plays, poems and ballads about spies which predate Cooper's 1821 novel, *The Spy*. Since they comprise narratives about spies, they meet my definition of "spy story." Each genre incorporates the spy story differently and adds to the evolution of the literary spy. Ballads, serving the limited purpose of immediately chronicling the events of the war, depict easily recognizable characters and well-known stories and establish their place in the ether of oral culture. Poems, generally short, reveal the emotional impact of the spy on the culture. Plays, both performative and, especially in the early part of the nineteenth-century, written, can add significantly to the development of the spy as a character type, but like all forms, their impact depends upon their circulation. Thus it is not surprising that William Ioor's obscure play, *The Battle of Eutaw Springs*, predating Cooper's novel by fourteen years, receives little attention from anyone other than theater historians. Its limited run in Charleston, and its very limited publication renders it nearly invisible to the literary historian. Still, as a spy play, it represented a number of advances in the evolution of literary spies. Although it may not have directly influenced many authors who followed, it demonstrates that cultural depictions of spies were not limited to historical figures.

Setting his play during the Battle of Eutaw Springs, Ioor injects a fictional spy into the historical episode. Captain Lawrence Manning, an Irish-born American officer, infiltrates the British headquarters as an Irish vagrant to learn of their plans during a short episode of the play. After his escape from the camp, Manning meets a young woman, who has dressed as a man in order to escape from the evil Tory Cowboy McGirt. Manning saves the young woman, who happens to be General Greene's fiancée, rejoins his unit, and valiantly fights in the battle which the Americans win. Ioor's play advanced the spy story, up to this time a tribute to Hale or André, into a fictional genre and created a successful spy who not only demonstrates Hale's noble motives, but avoids his martyrdom. The first literary spy, Trumbull's Spy, is a minor character, and villain to boot. Ioor's Captain Manning is a noble, patriotic officer serving his country, but, as an

Irishman, remains an outsider. Proof of his not-quite-hero-material status rests in the fact that he does not get the girl—she remains General Greene's fiancée, even though it is Manning who saves her virtue from McGirt. Still, as Stephen Graff notes, "At no time was there any reflection, on the honor or dishonor of the spy.... There was none of André's denial or self-righteousness" (90). Manning transforms back into a heroic officer during the battle.

As Graff notes, the play extends the well-established "'gunpowder play,' a military pageant with little story of character" (87), but it remains a limited presentation of a single incident and, like many examples of early postcolonial literature, places the greatest blame on the American Tories while defusing blame from the British government by depicting the primary British character, Queerfish, as a lovably comic character unwillingly dragged into the war. Comic, patriotic and uplifting, the play does not introduce many questions about the nature of spying, focussing instead on the comedy of Queerfish. It advances the spy as a character who can be noble not because he loses his life, but because he risks it. Manning, however, remains secondary to the pageantry and the patriotic speeches of historical heroes like Greene. Succumbing to the limitations of the short, early American play, Ioor has little space or time between the pageantry and the comedy to develop Manning beyond a likeable, heroic, Irish-American.

Of all genres, novels provide the most stable platform for discussing the evolution of spies in literary culture because they allow the greatest complexity and character development. Cooper's novel, with a far greater circulation than Ioor's play,²⁸ and with more room to explore national issues and probe the motives of the spy, would move the American spy story into the realm of epic and outline future conventions of the American spy novel: a dangerous "neutral ground"; a suspension of civil law; ambivalence about established government agencies, including the military; the establishment of secret, extralegal, pseudo-government agencies to orchestrate espionage activity; and an emphasis on disguise and the mutability of identity

The American Epic: The Historical Spy Novel

The earliest spy stories of the Western world appear in the epic texts of the Bible, *The Iliad*, and *The Aeneid*. Bruce Merry argues that the modern spy story represents the modern version of the epic; it satisfies

similar reader needs as epic poetry: familiar plots and clearly drawn heroes who survive a series of quests to go on to a sequel (218). The modern spy novel evolved from the first American action novels, the nineteenth-century American version of the epic: historical romances. John McWilliams argues in his book *The American Epic* that “once histories and novels became the dominant literary forms in the 1820s and 1830s, ‘the American Epic’ was far more likely to be written in prose” (*American Epic* 5). He cites Sir Walter Scott’s purposeful confusion between romance and epic, blurring their distinctions until there is no essential difference between the two (126), a confusion Scott’s American imitator James Fenimore Cooper seems to have embraced as well in a review he wrote in 1818, revealing a bias toward “heroic” fiction:

This whole school, which includes [Edgeworth,] Mrs. Opie, Mrs. More, Miss Austin [*sic*], and Mrs. Bruton ... was quite as free from sentimentalism as Scott, and, because less heroic, perhaps more true to everyday nature. Still he [Scott] was vastly their superior, for he raised the novel, as near as might be, to the dignity of an epic. (qtd. Dekker, *American Historical Romance* 57)

Although Cooper wrote his first book, *Precaution* (1820), in the form of Amelia Opie’s didactic novel of manners, while consciously imitating Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*, he chose Scott’s new epic form, the historical romance, for his second book. For its title character, if not its entire focus, Cooper chose the shadowy figure of a spy.

Cooper rejected the two well-known historical spies, André and Hale. Neither was epic material. Cooper’s spy, unlike André and Hale, had to survive the mission, which limited Cooper’s access to a historical figure. One of the lesser occupational hazards of spying is that the best ones remain unknown. Cooper based his character on true stories about a man whose name he did not know and whom he had never met. The most successful spies existed in such “deep cover” that Washington allowed Tallmadge to evacuate them from New York City before the Americans entered. Cast as British sympathizers, they rightfully feared serious danger from the American citizens of New York who might celebrate their liberation by doing physical harm to “known Tories” (Tallmadge 61).²⁹ Indeed some remained unknown until this century. From a literary perspective, these successful spies hold more interest than either André or Hale. As spies,

they are not what they seem, embodying many of the new nation's concerns about the mutability of identity and the difficulty of knowing one's neighbors as the industrial age introduced waves of migration to the cities (Halttunen xiii-xviii). In many ways, spies, surreptitiously gathering information and relying on their ability to convince their sources of their sympathy for the "right cause," could be seen as some of the new country's first confidence men and women. They survive in a liminal world, unable to acknowledge their sympathies openly, and performing actions which would be considered wrong in peacetime in order to accomplish a just purpose. Such is the case of Harvey Birch, the primary spy of Cooper's *The Spy*.

Harvey Birch is the titular character if not the hero in this novel about a largely imaginary incident in Westchester County, New York. When not peddling wares and gathering information, Harvey lives with his aging father and a housekeeper, Katy Haynes, near the "Locust," the local summer retreat of the Whartons, a well-to-do family who, until recently, made their primary residence in New York City. With the recent death of his wife and the British occupation of the city, Mr. Wharton moved to the Locusts to escape his grief and to protect his assets from the marauders, the Whig Skinners and the Tory Cowboys, who conduct looting raids throughout the "neutral ground." Shortly before the novel opens, he is joined by his two daughters, Sarah, currently courted by the British Colonel Wellmere, and Frances, currently courted by her cousin, the American Major Dunwoodie of a Virginia cavalry unit. Their brother, Henry, holds a commission as a captain in the British army. Mr. Wharton claims neutrality in the conflict.

During a spell of bad weather, the Whartons are visited by two strangers: the distinguished Mr. Harper (George Washington in disguise) and a scurrilous looking vagabond (Henry in disguise). Washington travels to the area to hear the latest intelligence from Harvey, one of his most trusted spies but unknown as such to anyone but Washington, and to follow the American troops whose lines have recently moved to include the Locust. Henry has come to visit his family, and is in disguise because the lines have moved. Actually it is more accurate to say that the Locusts mark the battlefront, as two battles take place just outside the house. Along with Washington, the Virginia Horse have moved into the area, and on a personal call to visit his cousins, Dunwoodie discovers Henry who, as a British officer, should not be there. Dunwoodie arrests Henry who escapes and engages in the battle occurring outside his father's house where he is

wounded and recaptured. Also wounded are Henry's commander and Sarah's lover, Colonel Wellmere, and Dunwoodie's favorite junior officer, Lieutenant Singleton. The Locusts becomes a hospital ward, and the site of frequent visits by members of the Virginia Horse including Captain Lawton and Doctor Sitgreaves, the unit's doctor.

In the meanwhile, the Virginians, when not fighting the British, strive to protect the area from the unscrupulous Cowboys and Skinners who terrify the countryside in the name of the Revolution, and to hunt the reputed, ever wily, Tory spy, Harvey Birch. Of course, Harvey isn't a Tory spy, but he can't tell anyone, so he receives a great deal of abuse from the Virginians and from the Skinners who are convinced he has vast amounts of wealth. In the meantime, Harper, a.k.a. Washington, has tasked Harvey to rescue Henry Wharton. Henry, a man of honor, steadfastly refuses to run away, confident that his innocence will release him. Dunwoodie, confident of the superiority of American justice, equally believes that Henry will be acquitted or that the just Washington, recognizing Henry's good intentions, will pardon him. To the surprise of all, however, the court martial finds Henry guilty, after which Henry agrees to go with Harvey, making his escape disguised as Caesar, the family's slave butler.

Throughout this legal plot, the lovers experience crises of their own. Frances, frantic for her brother, attempts to convince Dunwoodie to release him, causing the conscientious Dunwoodie pangs of conscience. The relationship encounters new problems when Frances mistakenly believes that Dunwoodie's affections have been pledged to Isabella Singleton, Singleton's sister. This mistake finds resolution on Isabella's deathbed (she dies as a result of a Skinner bullet intended for Captain Lawton), shortly before the court martial. Meanwhile, Sarah, blind to Wellmere's faults, agrees to marry him until Harvey arrives, just before the minister pronounces them husband and wife, to announce that Wellmere's wife has just entered New York City. Immediately afterward, the Skinners raid the Locusts and burn everything in it. Sarah goes mad at the combined shock, and her father doesn't fare much better. Dunwoodie, hoping to prove his love for Frances, presses her to marry him, which she does in order to gain more time for Henry's escape. Harvey and Henry escape. There is a battle; the Americans lose and Lawton dies. Cooper hurriedly provides a happy ending thirty years later as we meet Frances and Dunwoodie's son and his buddy, Lieutenant Mason,

who meet a strange old man fighting valiantly on the battlefields of the War of 1812. When the man dies, Lieutenants Dunwoodie and Mason discover a secret note which reveals him as Harvey Birch, George Washington's most trusted spy.

Despite his choice of a spy as the focal character, Cooper demonstrates decided ambivalence about spies. His characterization of André in *The Spy*, spoken by Henry Wharton, is consistent with the descriptions in the André canon: "You did not know him: he was all that was brave—that was accomplished—that was estimable" (73). Yet, the politically duplicitous Mr. Wharton denounces André's actions, saying, "when men like Major André lend themselves to the purposes of fraud, it is idle to reason from qualities, much less externals" (72). Seven years later, Cooper more directly chastised André for his mission in *Notions of the Americans*:

It is true that public opinion has fixed, of necessity, bounds which military men may approach without committing their characters for manliness and honor. Without this privilege, it is plain that a General could not arrive at the knowledge which is requisite to enable him to protect his command against attempts that admit of no other control, than the law of the strongest. But it is also true that the same sentiment has said it is dangerous to reputation to pass these very limits. Thus while an Officer may communicate with and employ a spy, he can scarcely with impunity become a spy himself. (188)

Although he does not mention Nathan Hale in this work, he does allow a loophole for those who serve the American cause: "there is no doubt that the motive and the circumstances may so far qualify even more equivocal acts as to change their moral nature" (188). He further blackens André's act by noting that "the war in which he served was waged to aggrandize its [the British government's] power, and not to assert any of the natural rights of man" (188-9). In addition, André's personal motives were not the purest: "With doubtful incentives and for the attainment of such an object [monetary reward and military glory], did this accomplished young officer condescend to prostitute his high acquirements and to tamper with treason" (189). Cooper castigates André because, as an officer, he should have known better than to spy.

Cooper's own title character is a working class peddler, whose class deprives him of full hero status in sentimental forms. Harvey Birch little resembles André. Desperately poor, and without a shred of a reputation left, he will not take a dime for his services to his country. Harvey seeks (and receives) no money, public recognition, or glory. Cooper depicts Birch's war, the American Revolution, as a war which seeks to assert the natural rights of man. His mission, to serve the cause and General Washington, takes on the aspect of a religious vocation: he has all but voiced vows of poverty, humility, chastity (much to spinster Katy Haynes's chagrin) and obedience. He evokes the unspoken name of Washington with the reverence usually reserved for God, often linking the two in the same breath. Harvey's chosen occupation suggests the isolation of a monk, without the supportive structure of a monastery. He stands as one of American literature's first individualists, but one about whom Cooper is decidedly ambivalent.

Ambiguous characters like Harvey do not fit easily into early versions of sentimental fiction. Cooper, influenced by Sir Walter Scott's historical romance form, created a new American historical romance and the prototypical American adventure story. Although he had followed the models of Maria Edgeworth and Austen in his first novel, Cooper clearly meant to separate his second book from the fiction of manners and from the Gothic novels that were the rage during the period. In his 1821 preface to *The Spy* he facetiously apologizes to "our own fair" for failing to meet their requirements in a gothic-style romance—lords and "moated castles, drawbridges, and a kind of classic nature" (32). Cooper does not intend his book for women, whose "credulity" and foolish love of foreign nobility would have the country run by "French valets, Dutch barbers, and English tailors" (33). He appeals to reason and pragmatism as he continues to mockingly apologize: "We would not be understood as throwing the gauntlet to our fair countrywomen by whose opinions it is that we expect to stand or fall: we only mean to say that, if we have got no lords and castles in the book, it is because there are none in the country" (33). In the same vein, he dismisses as eligible readers those Europeans who associate America with all things savage and who enjoy books like *Edgar Huntly* only for the cave scene (31), distancing himself from Brown's American Gothic. Like Scott's works, Cooper's is a book that will appeal to enlightenment principles of rationalism, and, setting himself as

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a postcolonial American author, one that will appeal to patriotic (male) Americans looking to read “realistic” American stories.³⁰

Cooper’s choice of setting and global backdrop, the Revolutionary War, signals his intention to provide his readers a patriotic novel depicting the public sphere of the men who battle for the birth of the nation. As his older friend William Dunlap attempted to do over thirty years prior, he attempts to present the War as more than a one-sided conflict between liberty and the evil British empire. Cooper reminds his readers that the American Revolution was in many ways a civil war. True to the metaphors of the early Republic, he figures the war as a family dispute embodied in the diverse political disagreements within the Wharton family.³¹ In his 1849 preface, he declares that the war took on “a domestic character” (Cooper, *The Spy* [1849] 6), reinforcing the family metaphor. Although Cooper presents a variety of interpersonal relationships, he saves the intricate plotting for the public sphere plot elements: Henry’s arrest as a spy, the policing of Skinners, Washington’s masquerade and Harvey’s wanderings through the countryside. The private sphere of the novel serves primarily to amplify the concerns of the public, and to emphasize that among the residents and visitors of the Locusts, all differences are strictly political. One may rightfully argue that Cooper overstates the similarities of the British and Americans and understates the underlying causes of the war, but Cooper’s view has some support. Even among the Americans, as W. M. Verhoeven notes, “there was no consensus about what the Revolution was all about”; for some the Revolution meant merely economic freedom from England, while retaining her cultural norms, while for others it signaled the beginning of a radical restructure of society and politics (80).

After the War of 1812 and the lingering party divisions, for some the country may have seemed even less united than prior to the Revolution. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 highlighted the division between free and slave states; the continued expansion of the frontier and the resulting Indian Wars revealed that the boundaries of the nation were far from static; and Eli Whitney’s perfection of the assembly line and the resulting increase in factories and industrial urban areas, began the shift from an agrarian economy toward a manufacture-based economy. Federal plans for funding highways and canals encouraged movement of not

only goods, but also people (Boorstin 252). In 1821, when Cooper published his novel, *The Spy*, the country was a collection of contradictions for which the persona of a spy seemed the best representative.

The Hudson Valley setting not only provides the frontline of the war, but also illustrates Cooper's ambivalence about many political issues: class structures, the two political factions of republicanism and federalism, Whigs and Tories, and patriarchy. The son of a self-made man of humble origins, he was also a man raised in great privilege whose bankrupt family estate was later bought by a self-made man. An avid American, he married the daughter of a Tory. Although bred to be a gentleman farmer, the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal, bad business investments and mounting debts dictated that he support his family through the more menial task of writing. His new profession began as a hobby which became a means to survive. While some of these oppositions would harden later in his life, by the time he wrote his second novel, *The Spy*, some had already begun to shape his opinions and reveal themselves in his prose. Although Cooper's life seems to defy the easy categorization he would employ in creating characters, Daniel Peck observes that "the 'middle,' regardless of the area of conceptualization, was deeply problematical for Cooper. Just as he valued both primitive man (the Indian) and the landed gentry, but distrusted the middle class, he could become profoundly disturbed over any state of being which was not clearly 'here' or 'there.' In his work, the 'middle' is always identified with lack of control and potential chaos" (97).

The Neutral Ground

This "middle" ground forms the setting, as well as the soul, of Cooper's work. Cooper took up Scott's concept of the "neutral ground" as a necessary setting for his historical romance. The neutral ground is a crucial concept for the heroic historical romance and the spy story. Beyond the clearly defined battlefield, the area is notable for its hidden dangers in the form of unknowable strangers, and mask wearing friends. As Bruce Rosenberg notes, the area is less "neutral" than indiscriminately dangerous to all: "In such a region, one can never be sure certain of one's friends, and danger lurks everywhere. This danger is all the more lethal because it is hidden, or transformed, or in the guise of friends" (*Neutral Ground* 95). Rosenberg credits Cooper with creating a conceptual setting, the "moral wasteland" which would become the

setting for all spy novels to come (95). As the seminal setting for spy stories that follow, the neutral ground provides the backdrop for many crucial aspects of the spy novel, namely a pervading sense of the indeterminacy of shifting loyalties, a suspension of civic law, and the pervasive violence (beyond the violence of “sanctioned” warfare) that such lawlessness allows. As one of Cooper’s early novels, and his first “American book,” *The Spy* also provides an early example of Cooper’s use of setting to convey important story elements. Although the Hudson River Valley not only contains some of the most striking scenery in the Eastern United States, but also inspired an entire “school” of painters, most notably Thomas Cole and Robert Weir, painting contemporaneously with Cooper’s writing, Cooper’s depiction of the area is particularly bleak.

The novel opens with a storm which lasts two days, and much of the action takes place late at night, so much of the landscape description is gloomy as well as threatening. Indeed, Peck likens the visual obscurity to the moral obscurity of the area (98). The land is composed of impassible rock ridges which fall off precipitously. The roads capriciously “run boldly to the base of a barrier that would frighten a spirit less adventurous”(318) and include “intense anxiety” provoking ascensions and “terror” filled descents. Cooper describes even a beautiful scene in ambiguous terms:

The day had been mild and clear, and the sun was shining brightly in a cloudless sky. The tumult which so lately disturbed the valley was succeeded by *the stillness of death*, and the fair scene looked *as if* it had never been marred by the passions of men. One solitary cloud, the collected smoke of the contest, hung over the field; and this was gradually dispersing, *as if no vestige of its origin was worthy to hover above the peaceful graves of its victim.* (133, emphasis added)

Although a brilliant sunny day, the scene, unlike the beautiful weather that would mock Henry Fleming in Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* (33), reflects the aftermath of the violence of the earlier battle. Although Frances cannot see the bodies of the slain soldiers, she can feel their presence and the “stillness of death.”

Verhoeven credits Cooper with using the metaphor of the land as an active agent, one that is “not so much morally and ideologically neutral, as morally and ideologically *neutralizing*,” a “reality gap” which transforms history into myth (73). McWilliams, amplifying R.W.B. Lewis’s observation that “for Cooper, the forest and the sea shared the same quality of boundlessness;...the area of possibility,” notes that “boundlessness” and “possibility” “are the essence, not only of Cooper’s frontier, but of his view of America” (*Poetical Justice* 9). The tale begins to create a myth of American origins, uniting, as in so many Cooper tales, the Tory tradition with an American Whig one through the marriage of Frances and Dunwoodie. It also amplifies the legend of Washington as just, omnipotent ruler. But it is a confused myth which does not embrace any of the traditionally ascribed causes for the war. Set in 1780, the war has long since passed the glorious defeat at Bunker’s Hill which galvanized the local American rebellion into a war. Indeed, the most historically significant action occurring right before the time of the story is the infamous defection of Arnold and the ensuing morality play of André’s execution. The myth, if any, embodied by the neutral ground is Richard Slotkin’s savage myth of regeneration through violence.³²

Given the legal mayhem and the rampant criminality that lurks outside, the Locusts, the Wharton family’s summerhouse, seems an oasis of civility. But it too is a site of indeterminate loyalties, rather than purely “neutral.” T. Hugh Crawford argues that the savagery of the neutral ground ends at the threshold of the Locusts. He describes the Locusts as the novel’s “theatre of honor” and notes that the main action takes place in the house where decorum and the civilized society of ladies and officers reign (405). We see little battle in this book about a war, and much of that we see through the windows at the Locusts. It is a world, like the Victorian parlors Karen Halttunen describes, controlled by guarded access (59). One may only enter if invited.

Despite Caesar as the watchful sentry, the house is not nearly as impenetrable as the occupants might think it. Harvey, admitted as peddler, enters as Harvey the spy, informing General Washington, who enters as Mr. Harper, of troop movements. Washington, had he come to the Locusts in his person as Commander in Chief of the American Army, might not have been as welcome as the politically indeterminate Mr. Harper, a man who is evidently a gentleman, yet who cannot be identified with either cause by the naked eye. The

Locusts may be a theatre of honor, but it is one which demands that one check one's politics at the door. Unfortunately for Mr. Wharton, politics are neither so easy to check, nor to discover until too late.

Caesar bases his entry criteria, demonstrated early in the novel, on appearance, class, and outward godliness. When Mr. Harper appears at the door of the Locusts, "without seeming to think it necessary, under the circumstances, to consult his superiors—first taking one prying look at the applicant, by the light of the candle in his hand—[Caesar] acceded to the request for accommodations"(38). Henry Wharton's appearance in disguise, however, does cause Caesar enough concern that he first notifies Mr. Wharton that another traveler requests admittance (43). Young Wharton, dressed in a rough overcoat, red wig, eye patch and affected stoop, looks like a particularly undesirable ruffian and compares badly to the elegant and upper-class Harper, "a tall and extremely graceful person of apparently fifty years of age" (38). In addition to appearance, Caesar adds religion to his understanding of character. When the revealed Henry Wharton asks, "But, who is this Mr. Harper?—is he likely to betray me?" (45), Caesar asserts, having seen Harper on his knees in prayer, that "No gentleman who pray to God, tell of good son, come to see old father—Skinner do that—no Christian" (46). Cooper informs us of the differences between Skinners and Cowboys, thus making Caesar's religious test of character a test of politics as well.

Cooper means the reader to see Caesar's criteria as remarkably naïve, but the family essentially follows the same criteria. They instantly warm to Harper, and are repulsed by the rough looking disguised Henry, even though he is their son and brother, while Harper is a total stranger, one who seems intent on remaining so. The interview between Mr. Wharton and Harper, as Wharton attempts to draw his guest out of his political shell, without revealing his own politics, is a study in evasive diplomacy. Cooper himself is coy about disclosing Wharton's objectives:

There was an evident desire on the part of the host to enter into conversation, but either from an apprehension of treading on dangerous ground, or an unwillingness to intrude upon the rather studied taciturnity of his guest, he several times hesitated before he could venture to make any further remark. (40)

Although Cooper ascribes the hesitancy to speak to the decorum of the polite host, the following conversation suggests that Mr. Wharton's desire to avoid revealing himself is matched only by his desire to discover Harper's leanings:

"I wish, from the bottom of my heart, this unnatural struggle was over, that we might again meet our friends and relatives in peace and love."

"It is much to be desired," said Harper, emphatically, again raising his eyes to the countenance of his host.

"I hear of no movements of consequence since the arrival of our new allies," said Mr. Wharton, shaking the ashes from his pipe, and turning his back to the other, under the pretense of receiving a coal from his youngest daughter.

"None have reached the public yet, I believe," replied the traveller, crossing his legs with steady composure.

"Is it thought any important steps are about to be taken?" continued Mr. Wharton, still occupied with his daughter, yet unconsciously suspending his employment in expectation of a reply.

"Is it intimated any are in agitation?" inquired the other, evasively, and in a slight degree adopting the affected indifference of Mr. Wharton's manner. (41)

A careful listener would gain little knowledge from this exchange. Even the comments which seem to reveal bias deceive or evade. Mr. Wharton's reference to the allies as "our" may reveal an undeclared leaning toward the American side, while Mr. Harper's comment, "none have reached the public yet, I believe," could imply Harper's position as a man who knows more than the general public, yet neither comment provides indisputable proof of anything. Indeed, Wharton's comment belies the fact that he has invested all of his money in British bonds (49), and that his studied neutrality results from his desire to safeguard his material assets despite his heart-felt loyalty to the crown (102). If Harper's words do signify knowledge apart from the public realm, they do not reveal whether that knowledge stems from his active order of troops as yet unannounced, or from intelligence gathered from the opposing side. Both practice the careful statecraft of

men of the ruling class who have learned to carefully guard emotions and their words. This careful dance of evasion goes beyond a simple "theater of honor," but it does suggest that the home is neither the fully private space of a family, nor the open battlefield of the revolution. As a "neutral ground," the Locusts can only maintain its neutrality through the careful negotiation of what is said and what is not said. Certainly, as Crawford notes, rules of decorum and the new rules for what honor means in the new world apply, but also, for those with the potential for power in the public sphere, diplomacy constrains private relationships in the house.

The young women, not of the world of future leaders, are far less discreet in their revelation of political sentiment. Like Caesar, who judges men on the emotional criteria of religion and appearance, the young ladies tie their political sentiments to their romantic involvements. Unlike their father and Harper, they freely acknowledge their sympathies and debate them openly partly because their preference either way will not greatly affect the position of the household nor the nation. Their opinions are only as substantial as reflections of the men they admire. Henry Wharton dismisses any import to them when he "good-naturedly" announces, "Women are but mirrors which reflect the images before them" (73), a point to which Frances, the younger sister, willingly accedes. Still, they openly debate many weighty issues that the men, locked in the language of diplomacy and appearance, do not acknowledge. Frances, when discussing André's execution, sums up the political justification for the war: "with what hope of success could the Americans contend, if they yielded all the principles which long use had established to the exclusive purposes of the British?" (73). Sarah, more succinctly, summarizes the British justification for the war: "being rebels, all [the Americans'] acts are illegal" (73). Although their sentiments are dismissed as the parroting of their lovers, the women, unconstrained by the need to be politic, openly air their sympathies. As the safeguards of civility within the sphere of domesticity, the ladies keep their "political" squabbles congenial and pleasant.

However, men also occupy this theater. When they discuss politics, they can follow their words with action, giving those words far more import and consequence. The theater of honor, as with any theatrical production, can only be maintained with either the implicit recognition of play acting, as in the case of the ladies, or the willing suspension of belief, as in Wharton and Harper's discussion. Their play relies on

careful masking and cloaking of political identity. In the dinner scene between the American officers, Captain Lawton and Dr. Sitgreaves, and the British officers, Colonel Wellmere and Captain Wharton, neither condition holds, and the veneer of civility enforced by the feminine civilization of home crumbles as the dinner conversation threatens to erupt into the anger of the battlefield (189-192). The “theater of honor” is mere artifice and cannot maintain its tranquility and isolation from the rest of the neutral ground. It too falls victim to the roaming raiders of the area.

Violence and Lawlessness in the Neutral Ground

One of the most striking aspects of the neutral ground is its lawlessness. The neutral ground is a scary, indeterminate place where few people live up to its heroic potential. It exists outside the realm of law; even the designation “neutral ground” has no legal meaning. As Henry learns at the court martial, “Its name, as a neutral ground, is unauthorized by law, and is an appellation that originates with the condition of the country. But wherever an army goes, it carries its rights along, and the first is the ability to protect itself” (329). Even the Continental Army, the most visibly official institution in the area, plays fast and loose with legal definitions. If the need to “protect itself” can cause an army to disregard commonly recognized “neutral territory,” what else will it disregard? A member of the executive branch of America’s tripartite government, the army also becomes the legislative branch as it redefines the “rules of war” and the judicial branch sitting in judgment on someone outside their official jurisdiction. The American army, made up of noble and admirable people, becomes a fearsome tyrant when the only official law is martial, and the common law is the law of might.

Henry’s case and by extension the novel focus on the role of law for America and the shape of the American judicial system. The British army, consisting of Colonel Wellmere and Captain Henry Wharton, does not play a significantly visible role in the story, and is notable primarily for its absence. Unlike the flurry of official British attention paid to Major André’s case, Captain Wharton’s case does not generate a single letter, and the only British comment comes from Wellmere who insults the Americans for their audacity to hold a British officer and question British authority. Wharton’s case, although designed with

many parallels to Major André's, is considerably more benign and one that, in terms of justice, could test the flexibility of the judicial code. However, the bias of the court and the law removes any flexibility within the code. Unlike Washington's condemnation of André, heralded as just, the court's condemnation of Henry relies on petty prejudices against Harvey Birch, assumed (but not proved) to be a British spy, rather than on measured consideration of Henry's actions and their consequences. McWilliams argues that there are "four distinct kinds of law in Cooper's world—divine, moral, natural, and civil," but one, "divine," remains unknown to us except as we understand "moral" law. "Natural" acts as a mirror in nature of "moral" or "divine" (*Poetical Justice* 17). Thus, for human purposes, we must rely on internal "moral" law, and "civil" law. In *The Spy*, there exists no civil law, only martial law which, as a code enforced by clearly interested parties, is as far removed from the republican ideal of a civil law system composed of disinterested law makers and enforcers as possible. This travesty of a judicial system cannot substitute for civil law. Like a Derridean erasure, its absence makes its need all the more apparent. Instead, we must rely on individual moral codes to enforce justice, an unreliable code at best.

But often those moral laws violate the little law that exists. Charles Hansford Adams notes that Frances, the strong woman who embraces the "right" cause of American liberty, in fact advocates several illegal acts (22). Not only does she support the rebels in opposition of British law, as Sarah notes, she also pleads with her lover, Major Dunwoodie, to ignore her brother's seemingly illegal actions and to allow him to go free. Frances's emotional pleadings echo those of Dunlap's Honora and render her unsuitable for public life, despite her fine powers of observance, matched only by Birch and Harper. Indeed, only her exclusion from the public sphere prevents her from recognizing Harper as Washington, even after discovering him in uniform undress. Dunwoodie lacks Frances's powers of discernment, but he does exist strictly within the law. He resembles a slightly more mature Bland who has learned his lessons. He is convinced that justice will be done by the court martial; thus he suffers little moral regret in taking and holding Henry Wharton as a prisoner. As a military officer and member of the executive and enforcement branch of the government, he must arrest those who appear to violate the law. It is the duty of the judicial branch to assure that the suspect receives a fair hearing and is dealt with justly. He understands and respects

his duty and its limits, and he fulfills that duty within those limits in a disinterested manner, not allowing his personal connections to Henry and Frances to sway him from that duty. His respect for the law, his class and breeding (from one of the old families of Virginia) not only suit him for leadership in the public sphere, they subtly link him to the agrarian aristocracy of Virginia which produced so many of the “founding fathers,” including General Washington.³³ As the perfect law enforcer, Dunwoodie stumbles only because of the inadequacy of the law.

Other officers are not so nice about legal propriety, nor so convinced of its efficacy. Captain Lawton, one of Dunwoodie's captains, demonstrates considerably less faith in the organized judicial system, favoring instead vigilante justice which goes beyond the realm of military justice. When Lawton and his troops discipline the Skinners, for no crime in particular but rather their generic misdealings, he has clearly overstepped his bounds as a military commander. The Skinners, as militia, do not come within his chain of command, so he has no jurisdiction. It is admittedly difficult to determine who has jurisdiction over the Skinners, which accounts for most of their danger. Lawton links his sentence to Mosaic law, “forty lashes save one”(234), and thus moral law, but in itself the sentence, not preceded by a court martial or any other type of trial, is lawless. In addition, he hands the prize money, which the Skinners have abandoned in their flight, to Sergeant Hollister, who then distributes it among the troops, essentially embezzling government prize money from the rightful claimants. David Brion Davis notes that this sort of vigilante violent justice occurs frequently in antebellum American novels (284), but even for what Davis illustrates as a violent genre, the lawlessness and violence in this novel startle. When the Skinners seek to extract vengeance, Lawton's violent action indirectly endangers the lives of the civilians he allegedly protects, violating the understood duty of soldiers to protect non-combatants. When Isabella Singleton takes the bullet intended for Lawton, it is apparent that the precipitous action of this “mad Virginian” has imperiled the lives of those around him. That the civilian victim is not only a woman, but also the daughter of his commanding colonel and the sister of a fellow captain violates all rules of chivalry which supposedly guide the gentlemen of the Virginia horse and provide the basis for his challenge to duel Colonel Wellmere on Sarah's behalf.

Even so, the reader admires Lawton's actions. Lawton acts from a strong sense of right and wrong, but one that cannot be satisfied by law during this time of war. The Skinners repeatedly appear as the scourge of humanity in the region, and the group that has captured Harvey Birch are particularly odious, having earlier not only robbed Harvey of all of his money, but also callously disturbed the dying hour of Harvey's father, nearly preventing Harvey and his father from taking their last earthly farewells. The Skinners are cowardly, running, along with Caesar and Katy Haynes, Birch's housekeeper, at the sight of the old man in a sheet. And they are particularly mean-spirited, not only stealing from the gullible Katy, but also setting the Birch home on fire. Although outside the law of the land, Lawton's punishment of them seems in accordance with Old Testament justice. Lawton's challenge to Colonel Wellmere also smacks of moral righteousness as he seeks to protect the honor of American womanhood. Although he had early cursed Sarah Wharton to her probable fate as the miserable wife of a pompous man, viewing her preference for a British officer as treasonous, he is the indignant protector of the nation's women. Wellmere, with the first shot, misses (casting doubt regarding his ability as a military man). Lawton is prevented from shooting Wellmere by the unforeseen attack by the Skinners. Davis notes that most duels in American fiction rarely end in favor of the hero, usually serving to add to the list of the villain's crimes, and often are mocked as antiquated vestiges of a displaced European sense of honor (283). Cooper's use of the duel is utterly unironic although he allows the cowardly and dishonorable bigamist, Wellmere, to escape, and to add further to his crimes as he chooses not to warn the local militia of the impending attack by the Skinners on the Whartons, as he could have done had he not ridden in the opposite direction.

Lawton's lawlessness follows from the concerns of military expediency and, though he disregards martial law, its precepts guide his actions. His action merely emphasizes its inadequacy for controlling the violence of the neutral ground. In the absence of martial law or even its vague precepts, the "law of might" of the Cowboys and Skinners reigns. Although Cooper's vision of military justice may be historically harsh, there was historical precedence for his view of the "irregular" troops, which, according to many witnesses, including Benjamin Tallmadge, was an area of lawlessness "patrolled" by two groups of thugs named "Cowboys" or "Skinners" depending on their proclaimed allegiances. However, according to many

accounts, each group was more interested in its own cause, that is, personal enrichment through pillage and plunder, than the larger (inter)national politics of the war (Thacher 131). In his memoirs, Tallmadge often refers to policing raids he and his troops made on the “cowboys” as well as the trouble he and his troops encountered at the hands of the cowboys; his sergeant-major was killed by a cowboy bullet (31).³⁴ One might assume that Tallmadge was complaining only of the Tory thugs, until one realizes that he uses the word “cowboy” for all the irregulars in the area, not merely the Tories. This use of “cowboys” for all of the area’s thugs is particularly notable in his testimony during the congressional debates regarding John Paulding’s petition for an increase in pension, as recorded in Egbert Benson’s *The Vindication of the Captors of Major André*.³⁵ Cooper also suggests that distinctions mean little, or if they have any significance, the Cowboys represent the best of a bad lot, being “enrolled” by the British, so “their efforts were more systematized” (46) than those of the Skinners.³⁶ In the case of the Skinners, “a petty holder of a commission in the State militia was to be seen giving the sanction of something like legality to acts of the most unlicensed robbery—and, not infrequently, bloodshed” (46).

Cooper not only picks up on this lawlessness; he embellishes it. The indeterminacy of the Cowboys/Skinners embodies the novel’s anxiety about the indeterminacy of identity which the novel expresses as violence unconstrained by the acknowledged hierarchy of an established, rigid social structure. The mutability of political identity mirrors an unvoiced concern of Cooper’s: the mutability of class identity combined with an assumed baseness of the lower classes. Halttunen identifies a growing concern about class and identity beginning with printed warnings against confidence men and painted women in the 1830s (1), but some of the same concerns are at play in Cooper’s 1821 novel. Cooper’s novel ponders, but never fully resolves, the interrelation between republicanism and “natural aristocracy,” the role of law in a nation that has divorced itself of the legal codes of its former government, and the relationship between England and America in the postbellum world.

The rampant violence approaches apocalyptic dimensions. Arson abounds, perpetrated by the Skinners on Birch’s house and on the Whartons’ house on the slender excuse of Mr. Wharton’s alleged Tory leanings as “revealed” by his wealth. Ironically, Mr. Wharton’s studied neutrality to protect his wealth

merely confirms his Tory leanings in the eyes of those who equate all wealth with British sympathy and drags him into the guerilla war waged on civilians by the Skinners. If the Skinners are indeed soldiers, as they claim, they have violated the constraints on warfare that martial law is intended to impose. As military practice, the violent act of firing a house occupied by civilians adds to the general anarchy by displacing people from their homes and their identities. The war between the Cowboys and the Skinners degenerates to one of vigilante justice as the Cowboys string up the leader of the Skinners who expresses a desire to join their pro-British troops. The half-hanging scene is a particularly horrific example of violence which signals the murky ethics of the war-ravaged "neutral ground," although it too has its own rough moral code which Birch honors as he chooses not to cut the Skinner down. What makes the lynching particularly disturbing is that it is not unusual. The Skinner watches as the Refugee (Cowboy) sets up a makeshift gallows:

[He] had stood both a close and silent spectator of their progress. He obeyed—and it was not until he found his neckcloth removed and hat thrown aside that he took alarm. But he had so often resorted to a similar expedient to extract information or plunder that he by no means felt the terror an unpracticed man would have suffered at these ominous movements.
(407)

Cooper does not spare us from the death throes of the Skinner, adding to the horror:

Here his cries were turned into shrieks—

“Help!—cut the rope—Captain!—Birch!—good peddler—down with the Congress!—Sergeant!—for God’s sake, help! Hurrah for the King!—Oh God! Oh God! —mercy—mercy—mercy—“

As his voice became suppressed, one of his hands endeavored to make its way between the rope and his neck, and partially succeeded; but the other fell quivering by his side. A convulsive shuddering passed over his whole frame, and he hung a hideous, livid corpse.

(409)

The accounts of André’s hanging are scarcely as vivid.

This violence clearly distinguishes the book from the sentimental accounts of André's and Hale's missions and signals a change in the focus of the spy story from the sentimental tale of a man executed for attempting to further his nation's cause to the immediate and bloody battling for that cause, and the implicit assumption that the cause excuses all manner of illegal activity. J. J. Macintosh, in his examination of the ethics of spy fiction, identifies among his "four main moral issues" of spy fiction, "the almost casual acceptance of the other connected immoralities such as murder, torture and deceit" (161). Those who number *The Spy* among the first examples of spy literature rarely comment on the violence present in this first spy novel. George Dekker is an exception, noting Cooper's juxtaposition of the "sordid villainy, anarchic violence, and anxious uncertainty concerning motives and identities" and the "uncritically sunny view of the Revolution and the American national destiny" ("Cooper" 25), a juxtaposition that reoccurs throughout American spy fiction. David Brion Davis notes that lynching and dueling, prevalent extralegal activities in the antebellum period, "were justified by an assumption that the people had only conditionally and temporarily surrendered their primitive rights of retribution to legal representatives" (268). When there are no legal representatives, "primitive rights of retribution" are the only judicial codes available. Spy novels, set in the "neutral ground" of a war zone where civilian law is suspended, take place in a world outside the reach of law.

The Spy Novel's Military Paradox

Spy novels, presuming the necessity of war as a legitimating force for espionage, yet distrustful of martial law, and even the military, create a paradox within their depiction of the causes which legitimate their primary focus as they both celebrate spying, and denigrate the military. Cooper's ambivalence about the military is even greater than his ambivalence about spying. For example, Lawton, the man of action, is uniquely suited for Cooper's image of the battlefield, as is his concept of right and wrong. Unlike his commander, he often ignores the letter of the law, choosing instead to take matters into his own hands. The innate aristocracy of Virginians has barely dulled his rough edges in the company of ladies. His troops know him as a lady's man, who will stop at the whiff of "a petticoat in the wind"(137). After Birch and Harper, he

has perhaps the finest observation skills; he is the only man Harvey suspects could see through his multiple disguises. He is a man's man, an imposingly large man with a full beard, a keen sense of humor and a strong sense of honor. He is, in many ways, the prototypical American action hero. He is also a professional military man who disparages the volunteer militia, even as he rouses them from their flight to charge the British again. Unsited for the constraints of peace time civility, Lawton must die on the battlefield, along with the professional army once the war is over.³⁷ Cooper writes that twenty minutes after Lawton falls, the field is empty of British and American troops (416).

Lawton's demise suggests Cooper's opposition to a standing military, a question hotly debated during the original Constitutional debates and argued eloquently by Hamilton in *The Federalist Papers*. As Marcus Cunliffe illustrates, from the beginning the country has had ambivalent feelings about standing armies and all things martial (37-62). America, since the French and Indian wars, has averaged a full-fledged war each generation, and after each such war has debated the need for a standing army after the war is finished. At the time Cooper writes, a standing army was not assured. The country had engaged in three such generational wars, and the post War of 1812 period saw renewed debates on the need for a standing military exacerbated by the lack of unified support for the war in the first place. The arguments for a standing army originated in the Federalist party,³⁸ but the War of 1812 was so unpopular with the Federalists, many questioned the wisdom of maintaining an army for more such wars. The army was fixed at 10,000 men in 1815 (Hickey 106), but in 1820, John C. Calhoun proposed reducing the army to 6000, "expandable" on demand with militia troops. The plan was not ultimately adopted, but as Cunliffe writes, "the assumptions which governed it gained almost universal acceptance" (54). Like many in the country at the time, Cooper demonstrates decided ambivalence about the military, and even the Revolution as war, in the novel. Military justice is a sham. The three battles fought result in apparently little gain and, in the penultimate battle, the Americans lose the battle. Lawton's death is for naught. Even the outcome of the war seems futile, for thirty-three years later, the same combatants wage another war against the same army.

Wars are themselves moments of ethical uncertainty, not only sanctioning, but encouraging, the cold blooded killing of other people, a point Cooper emphasizes and uses to advantage in the novel. Despite the

very Christian Sergeant Hollister's exemption of war from traditional Christian morality, there is something unholy about war. Dr. Sitgreave's pleas that the dragoons merely disable their opponents rather than hack them to bits initially seems to distinguish him as a comical character, but it voices a real concern regarding the purpose of war. Despite being an active booster of the American navy, writing a history and planning to write a series of biographies of naval commanders, Cooper writes little about the formal army. In *Notions of the Americans*, he describes former sites of battles as military "ruins" (176). Although he identifies West Point as "the great military school," the model of military service he presents resembles not a professional military but that of Cincinnatus: "one might almost fancy he saw the stubborn yeomanry of New England leaving their ploughs for a week in order to mingle in the past-time of reducing a hostile garrison" (178). Cooper served as a colonel in the local militia, as well as a midshipman in the navy, yet he never served in a war (he left the navy in 1811, prior to the War of 1812) and was raised by a Quaker father. Standing armies only had a purpose, in the minds of military detractors, if the country was always at a state of war, which as the novel shows, undermines the structure of civilization. War not only sanctions questionable activities by honorable men, it also legitimizes the activities of immoral men. The marauding Skinners and Cowboys are barely tolerated by the armies they claim to support because, in most cases, they do more harm to the other side. Peacetime justice would exposed them as the thugs they are.

War, however, is crucial for the spy novel. Harvey, for example, only exists within war. Once the war ends, Washington severs all official ties and Harvey disappears until he resurfaces in the War of 1812, where he dies on the battlefield. The military paradox arises in the exclusion of the spy from the structure of the military even as the military action justifies the spy's activities. It acknowledges the military as a necessary condition for espionage, as the primary customer for the spy's information, yet it also presumes the military's inability to accomplish the mission within its bureaucracy and regulation which clouds the established military's ability to interpret the information provided. The paradox is only partially resolved by placing the spy and his handlers outside the purview of the military and the law.

Spying as Extra Legal Activity

Another tradition passed to Clancy *et al.* from Cooper is the position of the spy as outside the law. One of the ethical questions of the spy novel for a democratic republic is the sanctioning of extralegal, if not illegal, activity. Despite Cooper's approval of the hyper-legal Dunwoodie, the real action occurs as a result of means outside the law. As Crawford notes, both Birch and Washington escape the gaze of the populace remaining outside the theater of honor (409), or, in essence, the law. Birch is the primary namesake of the title, but the description "spy" could apply to other characters, including Henry Wharton who is tried as a spy for passing behind American lines in disguise, and Washington himself who spends most of his scenes in the novel disguised as the inscrutable Mr. Harper. We do not know for sure where Mr. Harper travels and whether he travels behind enemy lines. Washington's masquerade as Harper seems to be an open secret among the Virginia horse (both Captain Lawton and Major Dunwoodie comment upon the "special relationship" between Harper and Washington); however, the disguise seems as if it should throw a shadow over the scrupulously honest Washington of Parson Weems's biography. On the contrary, Harper/Washington is portrayed as not only a nearly divine patriarch, but as a thoroughly honest man. Robert Clark concludes that, by including Washington as the ultimate "gentleman-spy" as a double for Birch's "common-spy," Cooper reveals his concern that even gentlemen may forget their position so far as to stoop to the role of the spy (210). Like so much in this novel, Cooper's motives for making Washington a spy seem too complex to untangle completely, but Clark's explanation does not account for the positive portrait of Washington/Harper. Were Cooper's concern merely that of gentlemen becoming spies, he could avoid the paradox of the Father of the Country acting as spy by using another well-positioned American patriot. The success of the clandestine mission (saving Henry), despite Henry's own bungling, presents spying as an effective, if not morally unambiguous, way to accomplish policy.

The efficacy of Harper's and Birch's extralegal activities not only suggests that in some cases the law is insufficient for effective governance, but also that some people, by dint of their special ability to lead, may be above the law. It certainly questions the adequacy of standard military means to wage an effective

war, suggesting that the spy story, as much as it depends on the framework of war to justify the spying activity, presupposes that spies are exempt from martial law. This extralegality, a significant facet of American spy stories, goes well beyond the British James Bond's "license to kill." It anticipates the meta-governmental groups, outside the realm of democratic law, which Rebecca Ann Harms discovered in her survey of late twentieth century American spy fiction:

A concept of morality exists in these [modern American spy] novels which is unique to their American writers: the notion that a higher morality operates at certain crucial acts which, in effect, justifies otherwise immoral acts. Simply put, this is the rather aristocratic, paternalistic idea that the people cannot be trusted to act in their own best interests and that there *should* exist a group of elite Americans able to put aside selfish, petty concerns to work for the public good....In all these instances, American writers have envisioned groups who, although professing devotion to the principles of the American way of life, are, in the final analysis, treacherously undemocratic. (61-2)

Cooper's use of Washington as a decision maker executing actions outside the theatre of honor, both as civil law and martial law, seems consistent with his preference for a natural aristocracy over the rebellious masses. Unlike Dunlap's Washington who merely executes the will of the people and lacks the authority to deviate from that will, Cooper's Washington/Harper not only executes the will of the people, he also unilaterally decides which laws must be enforced and which may be circumvented. He acts not only as the executive branch of the government, but also as the judicial branch in judging Henry's "crime." He is "above the law," both as the ultimate official appeal authority, upon which Dunwoodie depends, and as an agent acting entirely outside the military judicial system. Washington's "disinterested benevolence" makes his exercise of extralegal means a positive tool for leadership in these troubled military times. Later spy novels will make similar use of elite American groups, as in Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity*. One suspects that the American writers, including Cooper, might be slow to recognize the inherent contradiction of extralegal groups and democracy since much of this ambivalence is cloaked in patriotic language. Indeed, Harms's assessment of the controlling groups sounds not unlike Cooper's explanation of the only allowable uses of espionage

activity and possibly military action: "There is no doubt that the motive and the circumstances may so far qualify *even more equivocal* acts as to change their moral nature" (*Notions* 188, emphasis added). Cooper's ideal of a natural hierarchy as well as historical knowledge of the intelligence activities of Washington's army might have resolved any apparent incongruity in his mind.

The mission which occupies Birch and Harper/Washington, freeing the British soldier Henry Wharton from American captivity, remains problematical even within the paradigm of an extralegal spying organization. Although James Franklin Beard agrees with a contemporary reviewer that "there was surely some incongruity... in Cooper's making the commander-in-chief of the American forces responsible for the surreptitious release of a British soldier convicted of spying (and thus making Washington technically guilty of treason)" he is not sure that Cooper would have agreed as well (90). The apparent contradiction has confounded nearly every critic who has written on the novel. Certainly Cooper uses Washington's unseen rescue of Henry through his agent Harvey as a comment on the injustice of a regulation bound justice system devoid of compassion and lacking truly disinterested justices. Cooper may also have Washington interfere with the judicial system in this way to recuperate Washington's role in the André execution. By creating a case so parallel, yet different in motive, to André's, but one in which Washington does not allow the execution to occur demonstrates Cooper's Washington as a man who recognizes the difference between the nefarious activity of encouraging treason and the mere donning of a costume behind enemy lines for innocent purposes. Washington, unlike the colonels who sit on Henry's court martial, does not allow petty partisanship to cloud his sense of justice. He embodies the truly disinterested leader a republic requires. He frees Henry surreptitiously because, as commander-in-chief, he must maintain the appearance of lawfulness, even though the law is unjust.

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of Washington's intervention in Henry's case is that it goes so unexplained. Cooper treats the incident as if it were perfectly natural for the commander-in-chief to give aid and comfort to the enemy, because Henry is never really treated as the enemy. As a native-born American, Henry enjoys Washington's protection from injustice just as Frances and Dunwoodie do. Despite the violent battle scenes, the formal war seems to have as much consequence as a soccer game. The British army

appears as much less of a force than the scurrilous Skinners and Cowboys, who demonstrate their lack of respect for the American values of liberty and freedom from harassment. In most of the early spy novels, a proper understanding of “liberty” implies a recognition of class distinction and “natural aristocracy,” a concern among those who wished to demonstrate that the Revolution did not as much revolt against social forms, as it restored the independence America had enjoyed prior to George III’s ascension to the throne.³⁹

Some critics account for Washington’s seemingly unaccountable activity as an elaborate plot device. Beard likens the Harper/Washington figure to a Euripidean god acting as a *deus ex machina* (88-89) but we must also remember that there was historical evidence that Washington acted as not only commander-in-chief of the overt warfare, but also the head spy master of the country’s first intelligence network, a role Cooper has Washington perform in the “covert” disguise of Harper, a disguise that only those with a “need to know” (i.e. the officers of the Virginia cavalry unit and Harvey Birch) recognize. Although a modern intelligence officer might note that the mission seems to disregard basic OPSEC (operations security) precautions, Cooper does present a credible network of secrecy. The knowledge is compartmentalized; although Dunwoodie and Lawton know of Washington’s secret disguise as Harper, neither knows that Birch is one of his agents. Birch, in contrast, knows of not only his own activities on behalf of Washington, but also the identities of the other agents in New York (422), making him something of a spymaster himself. Lawton, far more observant than his commanding officer Dunwoodie, however, nearly stumbles on the truth of Birch’s activities, yet he is never cleared for the knowledge, as tempted as Birch is to share his secret.

Cooper received the germ for his novel from John Jay, the former chief justice, and his tales about his time on the New York Committee of Safety during which he supervised the espionage activity of several agents, including Enoch Crosby who was probably the spy Jay described to Cooper.⁴⁰ After his work in the local area, Jay served as president of the Continental Congress. In 1779, Jay authorized 2000 guineas to Washington for secret service activities (Knott 35), which would suggest that, while he might not have known details, he would have known a fair amount about Washington’s secret service network. As the brother of the man who invented invisible ink, Jay may also have instructed Cooper in some of the finer points of intelligence dissemination. Cooper’s conversations with Jay are not recorded, but one can imagine

that Jay, many years after the war, talking to the interested younger man, might have revealed more about American secret operations than the story of a remarkable spy who refused to accept payment. One might justly question Cooper's portrayal of the commander-in-chief wandering around the countryside alone dressed as an enigmatic gentleman, but one cannot question the intimation of his involvement in the activities of his spies.

Disguise and Deception

That Cooper does not merely condone but actually celebrates the deception Washington practices as Harper seems to indicate that, in Cooper's mind, the cause justified the means. Disguise, equivocation, and deception, as well as working outside the law can all be moral if "the motive and circumstance" are right. In addition, the disguise has a moral transparency—those sympathetic to the cause and gifted with keen observation can see through it. Frances, although she does not recognize Harper as Washington, intuitively senses in him a benevolent patriarch for the American cause. Since, as the future wife of a future American leader, she has "a need to know," Harper/Washington treats her as a daughter of liberty, fulfilling Frances's need and America's need, as identified by Jay Fliegelman, for a "parent who would prove the forming example which Britain [and Mr. Wharton] had failed to provide" (199). As Washington's sons of liberty, his men know and protect the secret. The disguise in itself is less a covering of personality than a total revelation. Harper is Washington sans powder and uniform: Washington as private citizen. Although Cooper never explicitly identifies Harper as Washington (although he hints broadly), the reader, steeped in the American mythos of the gallant commander-in-chief, as well as Gilbert Stuart's stern painted portraits and Weems's effusive verbal portraits of Washington, recognizes the dignified patrician Harper as our first president. We, and the other patriots involved in the battles on the neutral ground, have a need to recognize Washington. Flattered by our inclusion in the moral cause as Americans who recognize the cultural references, we readers may be less apt to question the propriety of Washington's being less than the utterly forthright man of Weems's narrative.⁴¹ Cooper apparently doesn't think the matter worth discussing.

Harvey, however, poses different problems. Aside from his revealing masquerade, Harper does not actually commit any espionage as far as we know. The only spying related activity we see is Harper's receiving Harvey's debrief in full (and ignorant) view of the Wharton family. Harvey alone has done the spying. Harvey's seemingly idle gossip actually contains the full report of the outcome of the battle between Tarleton and Sumter (contradicting the report circulated by the British troops which Birch subtly dismisses with "I believe they think so at Morrisania") and British troop movements (63). Harper's being debriefed in the open presence of the Wharton family removes the stigma of covert intelligence, even though only Frances recognizes in Harper more than a casual listener. Harper may receive Cooper's qualified approval as one of the officers who must, by the necessity of gathering information, communicate with spies, whom Cooper regards as unpleasant necessities. One of Washington's letters to Jay bemoaned the fact that "ambiguous characters" often must be the sources of necessary intelligence (Knott 35), a comment Jay may have passed on to Cooper.

At first glance, Harvey, the real spy, seems to be an "ambiguous character." Neither André nor Hale (Henry Wharton serves as the André character, although with nobler motives), Harvey does not apparently serve in the open and "manly" field of military battle. A peddler, "supposed to be a native of one of the eastern colonies" (58), Harvey's overt trade suggests images of wooden nutmegs and other con games which gained Connecticut the nickname "the nutmeg state." New Englanders in New York literature rarely evince much trust, as evidenced by David Gamut, Cooper's singing master in *The Last of the Mohicans*, and Washington Irving's Ichabod Crane of "The Headless Horseman" in *The Sketch-book*. Our first impression of the peddler is of a shifty-eyed and greedy man, but appearances deceive. We know very little about the peddler. His nativity is only supposed, and the "restless" eyes shift not to avoid being read, but to read the "countenances of those with whom he conversed...[to] the very soul" (60). However, only "the superficial observer" would stop at assuming his motives were purely mercenary. Keen observers, such as Frances and Captain Lawton, glimpse into the nobility of Harvey's character, but only as much as he willingly shows. For the most part he is content to (morosely) live out the ignominious, solitary life he has chosen to serve his country.

In creating the American adventure tale, Cooper created a new adventure hero type: the spy. Maria Edgeworth's criticism, in a letter to a friend, reflects a general queasiness about spies as heroes:

The story I grant you is confused, and the main interest turning upon the *pedlar Spy* injudicious. No sympathy can be excited with meanness, and there must be a degree of meanness ever associated with the idea of Spy. Neither poetry nor prose can ever make a spy an heroic character. From Dolon in the *Iliad* to Major André to this instrument of Washington, it has been found impracticable to raise a spy into a hero. Even the punishment of *hanging* goes beyond all heroic stomachs—the scaffold is a glorious thing, and may be brought on the stage with safety—but would even Shakespere [sic] venture the gibbet? (66)

Other British critics found the character wholly new and original. Indeed, Harvey Birch was the only aspect of the novel “an Edinburgh Journal,” as reprinted in *Portfolio*, could find to compliment whole-heartedly.

But certainly our chief interest is in the extraordinary Harvey Birch; the proper hero of the piece. The conception is new, that a man shall sacrifice not only all worldly advantages and comforts, but his *good name*, for his country; and its being essential, in his circumstances, to his country's good, that he shall be believed by that country to be a traitor and a scoundrel; that in the whole course of his life, while generous disinterestedness and fortitude are strong within him, he shall do no act which shall betray these graces, but, in the perfect keeping of his assumed character, appear in an avaricious, cunning, cowardly pedlar, until in his old age, when he dies for his country, it is found that he was known in all of his virtue to Washington alone, is no doubt the very *acme* of self-devotion. The description is good, and the effect very novel and interesting. (228-9)

It is not merely Harvey's dedication to duty that is so remarkable; it is his willingness to sacrifice his good name and his reputation among his neighbors. Such a character could not have gained acceptance by a large audience prior to Hale or André and the resulting changed perceptions about who spies, and why. Harvey's mission goes far beyond the mission of those gentlemen in that he lives among his neighbors and conducts his activities for an extended period of time, not as an apparent member of the army. While there were many

such professional “civilian” spies in the war, Birch is the first literary character.⁴² Because the identities of those spies remain unknown, it would be impossible to judge their moral characters, but one might suspect that their very anonymity would reinforce perceptions that spying was done by cowardly, greedy, untrustworthy people. For these reasons, the hypervirtuous Birch would appear remarkable. Most likely, Cooper drew Birch as such a moral character to offset any hesitations his audience might have in embracing the spy as a hero: Birch does nothing that we see of a morally troublesome nature: he does not steal, cheat or murder; the deceptions he practices, like the extralegal actions of both Lawton and Washington, seem justified by an extralegal moral code. Still Cooper seems to have had some trouble embracing him as a hero. Despite the title, Harvey, celibate, working class, and unrewarded, does not function as the conventional Cooperian hero of the work: Dunwoodie does. But just as Natty Bumppo would outshine Judge Temple and Oliver Effingham in *The Pioneers* (1823), Harvey garners more interest than Dunwoodie, and when Cooper allows him, has a far better time.

Although he often morosely laments his isolation, in his best moments, Harvey seems to have as much fun as any twentieth-century Hollywood spy, and as large a collection of costumes. In his hut

from pegs forced into the crevices, various garments, and such as were apparently fitted for all ages and conditions, and for either sex. British and American uniforms hung peaceably by the side of each other; and on the peg that supported a gown, such as was the usual country wear, was also depending on a well-powdered wig—in short, the attire was numerous, and as various as if a whole parish were to be equipped from this one wardrobe.

(381)

His dizzying array of disguises not only display tremendous cleverness, they also display a controlled derring-do unmatched by any of the other characters, including Lawton. In his escape from Dunwoodie and the rest of the troop, Harvey not only masquerades as the troop’s own camp follower, Betty Flanagan, he addresses each of the major characters in that disguise, and escapes, undetected by any. Even Lawton, a great favorite of Flanagan, becomes convinced enough that he shakes momentary suspicions. In fact Cooper

does not reveal the disguise for quite a while. When Harvey as Betty first appears, the scene continues for so long that the reader's immediate suspicions are at least temporarily allayed.

At this instant, the door of the prison was opened, and Betty reappeared, staggering back toward her former quarters.

"Stop," said the sentinel, catching her by the clothes; "are you sure the spy isn't in your pocket?"

"Can't you hear the rascal snoring in my room, you dirty blackguard?" sputtered Betty, her whole frame shaking with the violence of her rage; "and is it so you would sarve a dacent famale, that a man must be put to sleep in the room with her, you rapscallion?"

"Pooh! What do you mind a man who's to be hung in the morning for: you see he sleeps already; tomorrow he'll take a longer nap."

"Hands off, you villain!" cried the washerwoman, relinquishing a small bottle that the fellow had succeeded in wresting from her. "But I'll go to Captain Jack, and know if it's his orders to put a hang-gallows spy in my room; aye, even in my widow'd bed, you thief!"

"Silence, old Jezebel," said the fellow, with a laugh, taking the bottle away from his mouth to breathe, "or will you wake the gentleman—would you disturbed a man in his last sleep?"

"I'll awake Captain Jack, you riprobrate villain and bring him here to see me righted—he will punish you all for imposing on a dacent widow'd body, you marauder!"

With these words, which only extorted a laugh from the sentinel, Betty staggered round the end of the building, and made the best of her way towards the quarters of her favorite, Captain John Lawton, for redress. Neither the officer, nor the woman, however, appeared during the night, both being differently employed, and nothing further occurred to disturb the repose of the peddler, who, to the astonishment of the sentinel, continued apparently, by his breathing, to manifest how little the gallows could affect his slumbers. (228-229)

Until this last paragraph, the reader could believe that the Betty who appeared in the door is indeed Betty. The scene not only allows Cooper to indulge in another scene with the comic Betty, clearly a favorite of his, but also to demonstrate Harvey's cunning as a mimic and the power of mimicry as a trope of the superiority of white Americans to be able to "know" the subjugated peoples in the new nation. For the genre, the scene illustrates the power of the disguise as a tool for the American spy.

Disguise runs throughout the literature of the American antebellum period, especially in the historical novels including (but not limited to): *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Modern Chivalry*, *Hope Leslie*, *The Linwoods*, every spy story after Cooper's, and *Female Quixotism*. In each of these disguise scenes, the disguise typically crosses racial, gender, and/or class lines. In *The Spy*, for example, Harvey disguises as Betty, Henry Wharton disguises as Caesar, and Caesar disguises as Henry Wharton. In order for the escape to work, Henry must be able to mimic Caesar, although he does not attempt to carry a conversation in the same way that Harvey converses as Betty. The escape relies far less on Caesar's ability to mimic Henry, however, and does not suffer from the fact that Caesar, aside from cowering on the bed and hiding all parts of himself aside from his costume, cannot carry on the masquerade. Cooper depicts Caesar as a nosy and occasionally unthinking comic character, whose curiosity and lack of mental acuity betray him as he fails to realize that, by turning his wig in order to hear the conversation, he will reveal the primary difference between himself and Henry—the color of his skin. In contrast, Henry Wharton, thanks to Harvey's costuming and mask, passes inspection by "a dozen idle dragoons" (360). Henry, as a "neutral" white man can, like tofu, take on an assortment of attributes as addition: addition in pigment, in age as a stooped posture, and in features thanks to a mask "stuffed and shaped in such a manner as to preserve the peculiarities, as well as the color, of the African visage" (358). Since Caesar's transformation would require the subtraction of qualities, he can only cover his identity by hiding his face in gloved hands and cowering on the bed to hide his stooped stance.

Harvey's and Henry's successes also depend on the invisibility of the Other. Only Caesar notes that the wig is of poor quality and that Henry doesn't "look a bit like" him. It would have to be a very superficial assessment of Henry's parchment mask that would mistake it for flesh, and one that relied on a caricature

that depicts "African visages" with lips "as big as a sausage" as Caesar notes. Likewise, Harvey's earlier successful depiction of Betty depends on successful mimicry of Betty's speech and the superficial observation that he wore women's clothes. Obviously no one looked closely at Harvey. Lawton, of course saw "Betty" in the dark with "her" head down as she looked for "yarbs," but in the extended scene in the lighted anteroom of the prison, no one else looked beyond the assumed drunken stagger, the brogue, and the whiskey bottle. Even Harvey's impersonation of a fundamentalist preacher depends on the common, albeit superficial, knowledge of a type. Anyone who had attended the service of that sort of minister would be highly suspicious of the existence of a book entitled *The Christian Criminal's Last Moments, or Thoughts on Eternity for Those who Die a Violent Death* (359). If, as he says, "mercy is only for the elect," one would suspect those who wrote theology books would have abandoned, as oxymoron, "the Christian Criminal." Harvey counts on his ability to repel the curious onlookers with his "gross fanaticism" (354). After Miss Peyton and the landlady leave the room in disgust, Harvey remarks, "Such a denunciation would have driven many women into fits; but it has answered the purpose well enough as it is" (355). Harvey satisfies the dragoons' expectation of the preacher who would, predictably, foretell their eternal damnation.

Although less apparent in this novel than in others, this mimicry also assumes that the Other cannot mimic the white Anglo-American subject. Although Betty is not called upon to mimic Harvey or any other Anglo-American who speaks "standard" English, the assumptions underlying this motif of disguise is that she would be unable to, for if she could, she would speak standard American English. Like those who assume that their region has no accent, those who define the "standard" assume that their "standard" is the "correct" way to speak. Thus, the theory goes, one may mimic the "deficient" speech of the Other, but the Other, speaking in this "deficient" mode is unable to speak "standard" English. Therein lies the comedy of dialect. Homi Bhabha has noted, "If colonialism takes power in the name of history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce" (85). But as he has written eloquently, mimicry illuminates an underlying threat to colonial authority, especially as Harvey uses it. Mimicry is the "fixation of the colonial as a form of cross-classificatory, discriminatory knowledge within a interdictory discourse" (90), yet Harvey's success depends on the limits of that knowledge of the colonial to the shallow recognition of

difference, rather than the similarities of “the almost but not quite the same” of mimicry. Still Cooper presents Harvey’s appropriation of the attributes of the Other as a one way ability.⁴³

The same dynamics of mimicry appear in other spy stories which feature disguise. In Catharine Sedgwick’s *The Linwoods*, Herbert Linwood escapes from jail by masquerading as Rose, the family’s black servant (also with a mask and a wooly wig), and is able to talk his way out of jail, having learned how to mimic Jupe, the family’s male slave. Rose, like Caesar, hides herself in the bedclothes (2:232-3). Eliot Lee, the hero, masquerades as a Dutch egg seller who is only slightly suspected by a Dutch woman who notes, as Caesar does, that something’s not quite right: her English is “more broken” than his, and he’s a country dweller (2:154). In some cases other than spy stories, the ability to transform is less clear cut: in *Hope Leslie*, Magiwisca mimics the tutor Mr. Cradock, despite some very close calls (314) and in *Female Quixotism*, a poor Irishman passes as a young gentleman and Betty, Dorcasina’s servant, can pass as Dorcasina for a short while (212). By and large, however, the “superior” character can mimic the qualities of the “inferior” character, while the “inferior” character proves unequal to mimicry above his or her station. Spy stories, by the inherent conservatism of the rationale for spying (that a natural hierarchy can evoke illegal means to gain information to serve a just cause), typically do not explore the possibility of the Other *successfully* mimicking the dominant culture.

Paradoxically, the disguise also reveals the masquerader’s true nature. The “sentimental typology” of appearance as the window to the soul was a particularly strong notion in nineteenth-century America (Halttunen 41). Halttunen writes extensively of the assumption that one’s character was reflected in one’s appearance, but as she also notes, these same assumptions led to great anxiety when the appearance of goodness disguised less forthright characters. Within the culture of sentimental disguise, wolves in sheep’s clothing, like Wellmere or any of the dastardly bad guys that follow, may fool a few people, but generally only the full extent of their despicable nature is hidden to the hero or heroine and the reader. On the other hand, the goodness of heroic characters shines through their disguise, especially to observant viewers. For example, in John Pendleton Kennedy’s *Horse Shoe Robinson* (1835), the hero disguises as a rustic, yet the rustic girl waiting on him noticed something amiss: “the closeness of her scrutiny almost implied a suspicion

in her mind of his disguise. In truth there was some incongruity between his manners and the peasant dress he wore, which an eye like Mary's might have detected, notwithstanding the plainness of demeanor which Butler studied to assume" (155). Eliot Lee remains distinct from the average man in the street despite his costume. In Harvey's case, Cooper reveals his unusual skills of observation and his standing above his class in his first description of the character. The sentimental typology of conduct continues in modern spy stories, to an astounding degree. Jason Bourne, the amnesiac hero of *The Bourne Identity* initially assumes that his lingering remembrance of the international criminal world indicates that he is part of that world. His hostage-turned-girlfriend instantly, however, recognizes that Bourne is a good man, despite his having blown away three men chasing them (128). The hero's goodness is so innate and so strong that it shines through to sympathetic good people who can read it through his disguise. The bad guys remain mystified.

When considering disguise, we should also recognize that the inability to assume credible disguises undid both Hale and André. Christine Bold, drawing her conclusions from the story papers about the two historical spies determines:

[D]isguise became a central issue in spy fiction because it was the false costume which defined a spy and condemned him to ignominious death by hanging. Disguise symbolized the deep duplicity of espionage. While Harvey Birch's disguise was more psychological than physical, a skill at dissembling his motives and characters, in the story papers the cloak of secrecy became merely a physical appurtenance. It could be removed at any stage in the narrative to prove that the heroic spy bore no lasting kinship to the enemy whose uniform he wore and possessed no deep-seated ability to dissemble. Thus the traitor spy adopts disguise eagerly to mask his sneaky undertaking; the patriotic spy disguise has disguise thrust upon him, accepts it unwillingly, and is inept at maintaining it. (22)

Bold has a strong case if one considers only tales about Hale and André, neither of whom can star in a romantic heroic action tale. Harvey's primary disguise, as a British spy, may be "psychological," but he and other characters make prodigious use of physical disguise as well. Outside of the André or Hale stories, relatively few good spies die in the American spy stories, although bad ones die like flies. Although the

politics may be confused, early American spies are generally triumphant, even if not full blown heroes. Harvey dies at the end of his story, but he is already a comparatively old man—probably in his sixties (a ripe old age for 1814). His life is cut short, but not by much, and he is granted the honor denied to him during the Revolution: dying on the field of battle in support of his country. Later spies may suffer in jail, held in captivity like their beloved nation, but they generally escape the noose or the firing squad through some clever stratagem, often involving a disguise.

In Cooper's novel and the ones that followed shortly afterward, as well as the spy plays of the period, disguise not only establishes the superiority and cleverness of the disguiser, it also provides much of the humor and entertainment. Even Sally's short-lived masquerade as a boy in Dunlap's *The Glory of Columbia* is a figure of fun and wit. Captain Manning of *The Battle of Eutaw Springs* first appears as a hard-of-hearing Irish peasant caught inside the British camp, leading to comic confusion until the British commander releases him in disgust (22). The witty literary hoax, *The Journal of Mr. John Howe while Employed as a British Spy* (1827), features characters masquerading as countrymen and teamsters, dressing in female drag, smuggling contraband in a coffin, and vomiting children passing as victims of spotted fever. Harvey's comic turns as Betty and the fundamentalist preacher are easily the most comic episodes in the novel, if not the entire Cooper oeuvre. Even in current spy/thriller literature disguise has the same entertainment value. One of the most memorable aspects of *Mission: Impossible*, both as the 1970s television series and the 1996 movie, was the elaborate disguising, generally revealed after the mission was complete by the pulling away of a rubber-like mask.

Aside from its comic aspects, disguise also reveals and contains the fears of the mutability of American society and members within that society. Harvey's ability to "shape-change" underlies a perhaps more conscious concern of Cooper, and other spy writers—the mutability of the class structure. Although the bulk of class shifting is downward, as Henry masquerades as a ragged old man and as a slave, the transformation negates any pretence of a static class system. Indeed, by the end of the novel, Mr. Wharton and Harvey are on similar economic terms, having lost everything they own to arsonists. Harvey, as shape-changer, is contained by his patriotism and his dedication to Washington. He is less an independent operator

than the secret, yet unstintingly loyal vassal to Washington. Like Natty Bumppo's containment as the loyal servant to Oliver Effingham in *The Pioneers* and to Duncan Heyward in *The last of the Mohicans*, Harvey's potential threat to the class system is muted by his recognition of "natural aristocracy," yet it is an uneasy containment at best.

Class in the American Spy Novel

In this novel, as with other American spy fiction, spies, to be heroes, must work strictly within the hierarchical system that they have the power to undermine. Because of the radical activities of spying—discovering the secret; transgressing class, gender, and race categories; working outside of the law—the spy and the spy story must conserve the very structures they transgress, yet remain securely outside those structures. In the early American spy story, the conservatism must be even greater than it will be in the British spy stories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because the hold on the nation from external and internal threats is considerably less firm. If the British spy novel evolved from a "culture of imperialism" and the resulting concerns about "the threat posed to a nation by a foreign power or conspiracy, whether external or internal," as Thompson and most other theorists of spy fiction claim (85), then the American spy story evolved from the combination of postcolonial anxiety regarding who would control the new nation, as well as the colonizing concerns that accompanied the continued expansion of the country. Kipling, writing in the tradition of an acknowledged class system, can assume that his flexible shapeshifter will honor the class system of empire. Kim appropriates the cultures of those below him in the structure of colonial India, not those above. Cooper has no such assurances unless he presents Harvey's servitude as the moral recognition of "natural law."

Cooper catches himself in something of a bind. Because he does not believe that spying should be the occupation of gentlemen (his most strident criticism of André is that officers should not actually engage in spying), he has made Harvey obviously not a gentleman. On the other hand, Harvey as mimic could potentially transgress his class. He does use his knowledge to undo a gentleman as he prevents Wellmere's bigamous wedding with the information that his wife has just sailed into New York. Like so many other

troublesome contradictions in this novel, Cooper sweeps the possibility under the rug and chooses not to address it. By keeping Harvey ultramoral within his extralegal activities, Harvey's potential for subversion never surfaces. Although he has easily as much, if not more, claim to ill treatment at the hands of the Americans than Benedict Arnold did, Harvey epitomizes faithful devotion to Washington.⁴⁴ The tempting comparison to Arnold arises only when Arnold's name is mentioned in connection with Dunwoodie, who lacks not only the motive but also the passion of an Arnold.

Cooper is unusually conservative, but the active spy as unabashed hero did not occur for quite a while. Graff hails Charles Powell Clinch's dramatic adaptation of *The Spy* (1822) as the first play to feature a "common man, non-officer" spy (101), which suggests that prior to this point, the spy was a noble, gentlemanly character and Harvey signals a new egalitarianism in sharing the glory of spying with the working class. If so, this praise is misplaced because the bulk of spy plays were about André, with the two exceptions noted above. Samuel Woodworth's play *The Widow Son* (1825) might have more claims to an expanded view of spying, since it features a widow who acts as a spy for the American army and her sons, one of whom defected to the British after suffering false imprisonment under the Americans, and the other, a prototypical confidence man, who wanders from town to town and profession to profession as financial need, or threat of imprisonment, move him. The play also features Sergeant Major Champe, the industrious patriot who attempted to kidnap Arnold after his defection by pretending to defect himself, but was foiled in the attempt when the brigade was transferred. As in history, Champe does not succeed, but he wins the girl and the laurels—more than Harvey receives. Champe, in Woodworth's play, marks the emergence of a middle-class heroic spy whose development as a character would evolve in the novels after Cooper's.

The Next Generation and the Heroic Spy

The truly heroic action figure of the spy occurs later in the works of Cooper's followers. In 1835, Catharine Sedgwick, in *The Linwoods*, William Gilmore Simms, in *The Partisan*, and John Pendleton Kennedy, in *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, expanded upon many of Cooper's motifs in *The Spy*. All three roughly fit a similar formula that will serve well into the nineteenth-century: a family divided by the national

conflict, father (or father figure), usually a Tory; son, often a Whig; daughter, in love with a Tory until he reveals his falseness, or in love with a worthy young patriot causing tension with the father figure; mother, dead or ineffectual; and often a helpful, American-sympathetic aunt hovering nearby. Sometimes, as in Simms's novel, the story is told from the patriotic lover's viewpoint, or, as in Kennedy's, from his trusty sidekick's. If any British appear, they are officers and have romantic designs on the heroine. The spy may be an outside character, or the hero, or the villain, or many characters may be spies. Within this formula, all three respond in their own way to Cooper's seminal spy novel.

Both Kennedy and Simms, Southerners who resented the emphasis on the North's role in the Revolution, focus their action in the South. Like Cooper, both set their novels in 1780, although neither mention André or Arnold, concentrating instead on major incidents in the Southern war, the Battle of King's Mountain, 7 October 1780 (five days after André's execution) in Kennedy's, and the Battle of Camden, 16 August 1780, in Simms's. For both the neutral ground resembles a frontier impoverished by countless bands of roaming raiders; Simms describes many tortuous routes through the swamps, and Kennedy has Horse Shoe stumble upon many of his displaced friends who have been forced to move by thieves and arsonists. Both also punctuate their novels with incredible scenes of violence. The landscape of *The Partisans* features so many bodies hanging from trees that one might think that "body trees" grew in South Carolina. Kennedy seems particularly fond of violence against animals, featuring an extremely graphic scene in which a man skins a wolf alive (the wolf bites him, to the delight of the reader).

Both also make conservative use of the disguise motif, generally having their characters simply assume a different character along with ragged clothes rather than the elaborate masks and wigs Harvey employs. Charles Brichford notes, "While Birch's disguise would be equally effective (and equally implausible) anywhere, Horse Shoe's [assumption of a new identity] can only thrive in frontier conditions and in the circumstances Kennedy has shown us. The fluidity of frontier America which makes the presence of strangers an everyday thing and the abundance of non-combatants furnish Horse Shoe with the material he needs" (69). By emphasizing the fluidity of the frontier, both reinforce the liminality of the "neutral ground" of the novels. Simms employs disguise even more conservatively; his hero maintains a "disguise" simply by

not revealing his name and sympathies, allowing those who wish to believe he's a Tory do so. For forty-nine pages, Major Robert Singleton remains a nameless stranger; his name is revealed to the reader only when he is in the privacy of a swamp with his trusty lieutenant, Bill Humphries, who also "disguises" himself by using his father's loyalty as a cover while in town to gather information about Tory troop strength and activities. These disguises are (barely) plausible in the first part of the book because both are militia troops who have not actually formed their unit. After they get into actual combat, and discover a traitor in their midst, they abandon the attempt to collect intelligence as themselves, sending Humphries's father to the Tory headquarters to reveal Bill's identity as a rebel lieutenant. In *Katharine Walton*, Simms becomes much bolder in his use of disguises, and has Singleton place himself as a mole dressed in a Loyalist militia uniform.

Even more than Cooper, neither seems particularly fond of standing armies. Although Kennedy makes his hero, Major Arthur Butler, a Continental officer (Horse-Shoe, a cross between Natty Bumppo and Harvey Birch, serves as a sergeant), he and Horse-Shoe spend very little time with the army. For much of the action, Butler suffers in captivity after an abortive attempt to gather information (like Hale) while Horse-Shoe roams the countryside picking up odd folks and forming minute regiments to free Major Butler in numerous operations with various degrees of success. Like the cavalry in a western, members of the army under Campbell join Horse Shoe to free Butler during the climatic battle. Simms is considerably less generous to the Continental army. Considering his vocal stance on state's rights and well-publicized preference for a loose confederacy of states rather than for a strong Federal government, his antagonism to a standing army is understandable, even as early as 1835.⁴⁵ His portrait of Gates as a bungling bureaucrat who lost the Battle of Camden is scathing, and reflects upon Washington as well, however slightly, by first tying Gates's name to Washington's as "a man who, at that time, almost equally with Washington, divided the good opinion of his countrymen" (2:174). The heroes, from Singleton to General "Swamp Fox" Marion are all local men defending their homes from looting marauders, mostly Tories from the lowest classes of Carolina society. As Brichford notes, the local partisans speak of the Continentals "more as foreign allies than as a part of the same army" (78).

Although neither book mentions “the spy” or “spying” in its title, each is as much a part of the early spy canon as Cooper’s novel. Both describe intelligence gathering through the use of deception and/or disguise, as well as the spread of misinformation as necessary tools of war. Both embrace the violence of “the neutral ground,” even increasing the level of gratuitous violence in the spy story through multiple lynchings and animal skinings. Both also have their upper-class romantic heroes engage in these activities, legitimizing spying a step beyond Cooper’s. Major Butler acts as something of a Hale figure since he is captured in his attempt to gather information to aid Colonel Clarke’s attempts to regain Augusta and Fort Ninety-Six (31). Perhaps drawing a comparison to Hale’s clandestine raid on a British ship, and refuting the possible conclusion that Butler lacked an aptitude for espionage, Kennedy hints that Butler has already accomplished previous missions; Horse Shoe notes that Butler has recently returned from a month long absence, that Horse Shoe had been told was to get more troops (24). Horse Shoe himself has made courier runs. For Major Singleton and Lieutenant Humphries, intelligence gathering comprises just one crucial piece of guerrilla swamp warfare. Simms scolds General Gates for “omit[ting] many of those procedures by which intelligence was to be procured” (II 194). Because he “literally had no intelligence,” Gates lost the battle. Since Gates represents the bumbling bureaucrat locked into rigid military procedure, Simms also suggests that spying is not something the federal military does particularly well.

By making their heroes such lone wolves (traveling with their trusty sidekicks), both also introduce the beginnings of the romantic notion of the individualist spy saving the country nearly single handedly in keeping with the rising popularity of the Jacksonian hero at this time. Simms suggests that his hero is capable of not only turning a small rag-tag group of South Carolinians into a fierce fighting force, but that much of the force is unnecessary since Singleton or Humphries performs most of the action of the novel. Unlike Birch, neither Singleton nor Butler spy as slavish followers of a single general. Marion serves as the primary historical patriotic figure in *The Partisan*, but Singleton’s relationship to him in no way resembles Birch’s to Washington. Butler receives orders from his boss, Colonel Pickney, but one does not get the same sense of servitude from Butler as from Birch. Horse Shoe more closely resembles Birch (and does more of the active spying and misinformation spreading) but, although he obviously cares for his commanding

officer, Horse Shoe does not worship him. Perhaps one of the biggest differences is that both spying officers “get the girl” at the end of the novel, a clear sign of approval from the author.

Sedgwick’s *The Linwoods; or “Sixty Years Since”* also draws from Cooper’s tradition (and Scott’s, as the subtitle indicates), and, like Simms and Kennedy, makes the spy a romantic hero. Although her hero, Major Eliot Lee, is more of a “natural aristocrat” than the son of a wealthy family, he shares many similar qualities with Majors Dunwoodie, Butler, and Singleton: impeccable breeding, an appearance that announces his standing above other men, a worthy heart, and unstinting loyalty to his cause. He also is a spy. Sedgwick more consciously positions herself within the spy canon by dropping names related to espionage. There is a schoolmaster Hale, who although not Nathan, recalls Captain Hale. We meet Provost Marshal Cunningham, the villain who denied Hale a clergyman and Bible. André’s name surfaces as a referent for the kindness of Sir Henry Clinton to his friends (2:94). Sedgwick also evokes the names of less well-known spies: Nathan Palmer, a British spy whose primary claim to fame is as the subject of Israel Putnam’s pithy missive:

Sir—Nathan Palmer, a lieutenant in the service of your king, has been taken in my camp as a spy, condemned as a spy, and will be hung as a spy.

P.S. He has been hanged.

She also features an additional fictional spy, Elizabeth Bengin, who operates a safe house for other agents in New York City. Herbert Linwood, the patriot son of the Tory Mr. Linwood, functions as a Whig version of Henry Wharton. Like Wharton, Linwood is captured in disguise (as Eliot Lee’s servant Kisel) trying to visit his family. The similarities between Herbert and Henry are too great to attribute to coincidence; thus the greatest difference, their national loyalty, implies a rebuke from Sedgwick to Cooper for making one of his most attractive characters a Tory. The Tory figure in her novel, Jasper Meredith, Sedgwick describes as a handsome, talented man whose vanity and weakness of character contribute to his Tory leanings. Meredith is congenitally flawed; although he does not actually seduce innocent Bessie Lee, to appease his vanity, he leads her to imagine a greater attachment than he feels, and thus sends her down the road to madness. Unlike Wharton, Meredith does not become a general in the British army; we last see him as a henpecked husband scurrying on to a boat to England. Sedgwick makes the American cause so contagious that the charming

English Lady Anne Seton embraces the cause of independence as she falls in love with Herbert. Even the stubbornly Tory Mr. Linwood comes to embrace the American ideal of independence from England.

Despite Sedgwick's declaration that "Historic events and war details have been avoided, the writer happily being aware that no effort at 'A swashing and martial outside' would conceal the weak and unskilled woman" (xii), she includes a fair amount of spying for military and political purposes by many people: Helen Ruthven, who conspires with her brother to kidnap Washington (the plan fails); Eliot Lee, who acts not only as an open courier, but also a spy in disguise on an extended mission in British occupied New York City; and Lizzy Bengin as an in-place spy, who later receives a pension from Congress. There aren't any battle scenes (although members of the American Army come to the aid of Mrs. Archer and her blind twins when they are attacked by the Cowboys), but the backdrop of the war legitimates the spying. Sedgwick, unlike her fellow historical romancers, does not seem particularly hostile to a standing army, but neither does she embrace one.

Sedgwick, like Simms and Kennedy, embraces many of the motifs from Cooper's novel, including the neutral ground, the legitimization of spying as a military activity, as well as the unnuanced cruelty of martial law, although she ascribes that to a flaw in the British system. Also like Simms and Kennedy, she breaks from Cooper in making her spy a hero. Even more than the other three novels, *The Linwoods* features Eliot Lee as a sort of Nathan Hale figure with considerably better luck. Sedgwick, Simms, and Kennedy all emphasize heroes as local boys who have direct ties to the people living in the area they defend. Although Cooper connects Dunwoodie to the Locusts, Westchester County is protected by imports from Virginia. The only New Yorker, Henry, fights for the British. Simms emphasizes his hero's local ties more than the others, making not only Singleton, but his entire troop, irregular troops who enlist to protect their homes. In both Sedgwick and Kennedy, one senses that the soldiers fight not only for America, but for home. Eliot, from nearby Connecticut, has many close friends in New York, including the Whartons. Butler, although from outside the immediate area, was raised in the South and has married a local woman. This emphasis on defending the homeland not only ties the heroes to the presumption that the United States fights wars only when directly threatened by a disruptive force, but also to a domestic idea of heroism. Although the spy novel is an epic, in most cases it remains a rather domestic epic, depicting heroes who receive not just fame,

but family as a reward. Sedgwick's, Simms's, and Kennedy's novels all end in marriage (actually Kennedy's ends in the revelation of a marriage which had begun in secret before the action of the novel).

The American spy novel, evolving concurrent with the nation's evolution, depicts the concern of an emergent nation to populate and settle the land and establish it as a homeland, a concern which translates into a privileging of domesticity and family. Although the spy story is conducted in the public sphere, the concerns of that sphere—permanency, creating a national family, and establishing "roots" to the society—all translate into the family metaphor. As much as the spy novel populates the public sphere, who wins the war concerns us less than what sort of people win the war and what will happen in the aftermath. Likewise, the actual information gathered during the spying receives less attention than the espionage and extralegal activity. The American spy novel, evolving from patriotic military plays and the historical romance, sees spying as an excuse for adventure, not only as a way to gather information. Likewise, the actual opponent in the war matters less than American responses to the war itself. Any villainous stereotype will suffice. The individual battles and stratagems of the heroes and the villains hold more of our attention than the larger war, whose outcome has become well-known history. For this reason the actual information gathered in spying missions either consists of a personal nature or does not surface. Sometimes, it is not even collected. Kennedy's Major Butler fails to collect any information of use to Colonel Clarke. Harvey's information about troop movement early in the novel comprises the only real intelligence we hear (Caesar hears murmurs of other information, but cannot decipher it). Although Singleton and Humphries go into town as assumed neutrals to learn about British and Tory positions, we hear very little of it, and they quickly abandon the information gathering. We know that Eliot Lee wanders all over the city gathering and spreading information, but we have no knowledge of what it is. Like Poe's purloined letter, the contents of the intelligence matter less than the act of gathering. Military intelligence of troop count, movement, and fortifications, it seems, holds little interest for anyone not actually fighting the war.

The act of gathering the information by daring, as an individual, to deceive single-handedly a fierce, well armed opponent, primarily by the power of one's wit, appeals to American idealization of the self-reliant individual. With the merging of Harvey Birch and Peyton Dunwoodie in 1830s versions of the spy

figure, the later historical romancers create the all-American hero unrestrained by regulation, whose actions, although perhaps technically illegal, are guided by higher moral principles than the imperfect law written and enforced by imperfect men. In sentimental fashion, he is rewarded with the perfect mate, a practice that continues in current American spy novels.

Chapter Four

The Spy Story as Biography

Memoirs, focusing as on the central character, helped to develop the spy as a character type in American literature. As liminal characters caught in the historical moment between colonial America and the postcolonial United States, spies write memoirs which reflect the end of empire from viewpoint of the former colonial. Desires to solidify independence from Britain politically and culturally, concerns about what shape government and culture should take after British rule, anxieties about American Indians disrupting the claim of white settlers to the land, and other issues for the emerging nation surface in these memoirs which justify the problematical act of spying as a necessary tool for protecting the homeland. Memoirs, presented as the true version of events as told by a historical eyewitness, share with historical romances a debt to history, whether they be true memoirs or elaborate fictions told as truth, in their presentation to the public of an “authentic” narrative. Spy memoirs rely even more heavily than spy fiction on the historical depictions of threats to national security as a legitimizing *raison d’être* for espionage since the spy is not presented as a fictional construct, but as a real person whose actions are open to judgment by his reading audience. As such, their impact on the genre of spy literature is not only apparent in their literary imitators, like Herman Melville’s novel, *Israel Potter, or His Fifty Years of Exile*, but also in modern versions of the genre.

Although histories of the Revolution suggest that the spies covered the countryside, spy memoirs surface even less frequently than dramatic and novelistic depictions of spies in the war. There are several possible reasons. For one, many spy narratives, like other memoirs of the Revolution, were not written until several decades after the war had ended and the United States’ independence from England appeared assured. The delay also may have resulted from changes in the pension laws after the War of 1812 which made more veterans eligible, from the historical hindsight required to see the actions of common soldiers as “history,” and from the desire to see the Revolution as an inevitability which all Americans supported. While some spies and soldiers wrote their narratives for the pragmatic purpose of supporting pension claims,

some appear to have written their narratives to create a cohesive memory of the reasons for the war as the country approached its fiftieth anniversary.

Also, as we have seen, spying did not appear in creative literature for several years after the Revolutionary war until, at the earliest, 1798 when William Dunlap wrote *André*. In addition to early cultural hesitancy to embrace spying as a worthy occupation, those in the secret employ of the government may have been loathe to disclose that secret. However, this seems less likely historically. In the early days of the country, the secret service was considered as temporary as the military so there would not have been the same imperative for a life of secrecy about classified intelligence activities that currently shrouds potential literary production of twentieth-century intelligence workers.⁴⁶ On the other hand, although the immediate need for domestic spy networks evaporated with the conclusion of the war, the new nation did use limited covert activity to exercise influence in the international arena. Nathan Miller notes that in 1790 Congress appropriated forty thousand dollars, growing three years later to one million dollars, for a secret service fund used primarily for ransoming Americans held by Barbary pirates and for bribing foreign officials (65). It would be a mistake, however, to assume that those early international covert activities were analogous to current American international covert networks. In any case, the agents of the American Revolution typically did not become involved in the international espionage scene. To tell their stories later would not comprise the integrity of the nascent secret service.

Some spies may have not considered themselves spies as much as soldiers tasked to conduct isolated spy missions. As a result, some memoirs authored “by a soldier of the Revolution” actually describe spying activity as instances of the soldier’s other duties. The guerilla nature of the war, and its long duration as a war of attrition, provided many opportunities for scouting and raiding parties which, by their emphasis on individual action as well as their inherent danger should the party be caught, could highlight the personal bravery of the memoirist and the sacrifices he made for his country. Although these are spy memoirs, they remain lumped with other memoirs of revolutionary soldiers.

Compounding the scarcity of spy memoirs is the relative obscurity of early American biography which, as Paul John Eakin notes, is an unexplored area of American literature, in part because it denies easy

categorization (3). Indeed, as Lawrence Buell notes in his survey of autobiographies written before 1875, the vast majority were not written by people one could consider “creative writers, either by trade or avocation if one judges the creative impulse by whether they published another work of narrative, poetry, drama, or literary prose other than sermons” (“Autobiography” 48). Early American literary study, primarily concerned with “creative writers” typically ignores the autobiographical writings of people who were not either creative writers or major historical figures, like Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson. Thus, the memoirs of unknown spies almost entirely escapes critical attention, even though, as Buell notes, nearly three fourths of the antebellum autobiographies listed in Louis Kaplan’s standard bibliography of American autobiography are either spiritual narratives or adventure narratives (“Autobiography” 48). Spy narratives fall into the latter category, which may in fact be much larger since Kaplan notes that his list excludes “episodic narratives” and narratives which only recount military activity with little emphasis on the self (v), both of which might describe spy narratives such as *The Journal Kept by Mr. John Howe While He was Employed as a British Spy* (1827) which was not listed.⁴⁷

For some soldiers (and military spies), telling their stories became an economic imperative as evidence for collecting a pension. The British government had a long history of providing pensions for those disabled by war, and for providing “half-pay” to officers after a war as a retainer to ensure that the officers could be called upon in the future (Glasson 9-12). The American Congress, after wrestling with the question of disability pensions and service pensions all throughout the war and for decades afterward, also developed a plan for pensions for disabled soldiers and seamen and for limited service pensions for officers, although the plan went through many revisions from 1781 through 1820. The question of pensions wracked the Congress and the country for decades. Although no one disputed the justice of providing for those soldiers incapacitated during the war, the idea of a lifetime social welfare for such soldiers met with disapproval from the public. The government evaluated invalids to determine the seriousness of their injury and pay them accordingly, with the understanding that their disability would be reevaluated periodically. By 1806, invalid pensions had expanded to include those who, as the result of the delayed effect of a war related injury, found themselves incapacitated after the war. But invalid pensions did not cause nearly the consternation that

service pensions did. New Englanders were particularly distressed by the idea of service pensions, and by the implication that officers would be distinguished as a distinct social class, a possibility that led ultra-democratic delegates in Connecticut to agree that the state of Connecticut would not pay into the federal government's pension plans. Concerns about the socio-economic distinctions that would result, as well as the indignation that officers did not consider themselves sufficiently paid for their service by the patriotic satisfaction of serving their country, caused all the northern states to reject the pensions and threaten secession from the federal system. The officers, whose commission implied their continued service through the war, resented the states' stinginess in rewarding their sacrifices of health and wealth during the protracted war. Many officers tapped their own pocketbooks for supplies for their men and watched their private business concerns fall into ruin during the war. Conditions were miserable; the war seemed endless; and any immediate gleams of glory had long since faded. Patriotism did not seem to be nearly enough of a reward. The officers complained bitterly to their commander-in-chief and began to resign their commissions.

As a result of a threatened revolt, the Congress offered officers either half pay for life, or full pay for six years, but debate about the matter continued on for years, both because of the distinction between enlisted personnel and officers, and because of charges of fraud at the hands of unscrupulous speculators who often cheated both pensioners and the government. Although the government wanted to reward those who sacrificed for their country, it didn't want to establish a dependent class or to create distinct classes. When the American government found itself with a huge budgetary surplus in 1816 as a result of increased tariff collection after the War of 1812, President Monroe asked the Congress to expand pensions to those Revolutionary veterans who, for whatever reason, were reduced to indigence (Glasson 65). Speaking in 1817, he had presumed the number of living veterans was fairly small.⁴⁸ Congress, never particularly supportive of non-disability related pensions, argued the question and imposed the restrictions that would-be pensioners must have served in the war for nine months until the close of the war, must be American citizens, and must be in need of assistance (Glasson 67). Even limited in this way, the 1818 act resulted in a flood of applications from veterans and those who claimed to be. Overwhelmed by the number of applications, the government processed many fraudulent claims. As Glasson writes, "a measure proposed for the benefit of a

few revolutionary survivors [presumed to be less than 1900] was likely to increase the annual pension expenditure from two or three hundred thousand dollars to two or three million dollars" (68). Public outrage resulted in strict legislation against pension fraud and a greater burden of proof for pensions (Glasson 71).

Because the government's documentation was imperfect, many claims relied upon the depositions of at least two witnesses, and whatever documentation could be gathered. For those attempting to collect thirty-five years after the close of the war, some of this information could be difficult to gather. Some people published their story as a way to document their claims for military pensions. For some spies, such documentation could be crucial for recognition of services rendered which, because of the secret nature of their activities, might not be reflected in the muster rolls. While some published separate pamphlets or books, some soldiers and spies published their stories in magazines. John Smith Hanna, in his transcription of Captain Samuel Dewees's memoirs, recounts the story of a Mr. Bancroft who published his story in the pages of *The Olive Branch*, a Boston magazine. Mr. Bancroft, who was chosen soon after his enlistment to serve as a secret courier (on retainer) for General George Washington, was struck from the rolls before he had served nine months as a result of this duty, thus was rendered ineligible for a pension under the Congressional statute (79-84). *Niles' Weekly Register*, which routinely carried transcripts of Congressional debates, including those on the question of pensions, also published the accounts of enlisted men and officers who were seeking pensions, like William Watson, who worked his way from private to captain over the eight years he served in the war. While such accounts may not be news *per se*, they did appeal to the readers' (and editors') patriotic nostalgia for the heroic actions during a war which, unlike the War of 1812, seemed to have a clear objective and, in the hindsight of victory, popular support. The memoirs of those not seeking pensions, like that of Sergeant Jasper who acted as a ranger-at-large to covertly rescue prisoners of war, also made their way into such open forums as *The New York Mirror and Ladies' Literary Gazette*. In such stories of the men who sacrificed to serve their country, a pathetic ending greatly enhanced the story's sentimental potential. Such tales also enjoyed modest success in book form. The particularly pathetic tale of Israel Potter, a veteran of the war who, via a prison ship, landed in England where he remained for the duration of the both the Revolution and the War of 1812, and an additional ten years, enjoyed three printings, although it

did not do much for the memoirist's pocketbook and nothing to sway the opinion of the War Department toward giving him a pension. However, his narrative did inspire Herman Melville's retelling of his story thirty-one years later.

Unlike historical romances by professional writers or people in the professional classes, many spy narratives were written or dictated by common soldiers who later became laborers or farmers. One would expect more narratives written as a result of pension claims to be written by common soldiers rather than officers since, after much spirited negotiation, commissioned officers received pension packages as a result of their rank, and thus had fewer reasons to document claims for a pension. But the distinction continues even with those spy narratives written for the veteran's personal amusement or to pass on his stories to his children which may or may not have been intended for publication. Enlisted spies from the working class seem to express a greater acceptance of spying as a legitimate military activity than upper classes do, even though people of all economic backgrounds engaged in intelligence activities. Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge, one of Washington's spy masters, was perhaps the highest ranked spy to publish a memoir; yet his memoir details far more of his overt military activity than his role as a covert spy master. Even in his account of his meeting Major André, he describes his interest in the famous captive as one of Washington's military officers rather than as one of his intelligence officers (35-8). Memoirs by high-ranking military officers were common, but those of America's well-placed spies were considerably less so. Benjamin Franklin, one of America's most active diplomats during the war, writes nothing of his diplomatic adventures (and the concomitant espionage intrigues all around him) during the Revolution in his *Autobiography* (1790), which ends in 1757. Unlike today, when exposed traitors sign book deals nearly simultaneously with their defections, Revolutionary high-ranking traitors seem particularly reticent to document their treason. Depending on one's opinion regarding Joshua Hett Smith's role in the Arnold defection, his *Narrative of The Death of Major André* may be a possible exception, yet Smith was a comfortable farmer, hardly part of the American gentry, and his account sought to recuperate his image from that of the man who aided the traitor Benedict Arnold and who failed to help Major André escape. The prominent American traitors who spied for Britain apparently were not brash enough to reveal their activity through the press even though all were

prodigious writers. Benedict Arnold, aside from letters designed to encourage defectors from the American ranks and, later, to argue with Parliament for more money, did not write his version of events. Nor had Benjamin Church written any overt denunciation of the American cause or his reasons for betraying American trust prior to his fatal voyage to the West Indies. Edward Bancroft's (not the Mr. Bancroft of *The Olive Branch*) report to the British Government, entitled *A Narrative of the Objects and Proceedings of Silas Deane, as Commissioner of the United Colonies to France in 1776, made to the British Government*, does not qualify as a spy narrative since it is actually a secret report of a spy to his employer, discovered only many years later, in the 1880s, by the American researcher B.F. Stephens (O'Toole 35).⁴⁹ Otherwise, Bancroft writes nothing of his activities on behalf of the British government and his betrayal of both his country's and his mentor's, Silas Deane's, trust. This collective silence about their activities as spies among the well-to-do may suggest a continued hesitancy about the honorableness of spying, despite the near canonization of André and Hale. As a result, the spy memoir focuses less on the Cooperian patrician hero of the spy novel than on the working-class spy, and as such, often communicates a more populist and, as Gordon S. Wood would argue, more radical view of the Revolution (5-6).

Complicating an easy analysis of populist strains in the narratives is the difficulty that several narratives were published well after they were written, often with amendments by professional editors from later generations who stress the importance of preserving the memoir as an artifact of the founding of the nation. These editions are tasked to bear a heavier national import than their writers may have initially intended, and are often marked by elaborate prose extolling the virtue of the memoirist and the other warriors of the revolution, as well as extraneous histories of assorted battles and conditions during the Revolution, related to the narrative only by the date of their occurrence. While these adorned narratives may say less about the nature of the memoirists than of the editors and the period during which they were published, they add to our understanding of the cultural ambivalence about spying and upper class concerns that America's celebrated ingenuity could quickly turn into cupidity and deception. The *Athenaeum*, a magazine devoted to appreciation of the arts and (British) cultural refinement, published the following description of the American people from "a British traveller": "The spirit of enterprise is universal, and would deserve high

commendation, were it always conducted on just and liberal principles; but the reverse is generally the case: fraud, smuggling, and perjury are practiced with success and without reserve; and thus cupidity prevails among them [the Americans] to an astonishing degree” (473). The editors, admitting “much truth” to the description, apparently published the description as a warning of how other nations saw the American character with the hopes of changing that character. Given upper and middle-class concerns about many of the traits which lie behind both spying and the business dealings which rendered class distinctions unstable, and the difficulty of discerning “just and liberal principles” from unscrupulous ones, it is not surprising that they were anxious about embracing espionage as a noble activity. Lower classes, less concerned about disruptions in the social order, emphasized their humble roots when writing about their activities as spies.

While the upper classes may have been hesitant to embrace the activities that lay behind spying and social mobility, an emphasis upon humble roots was a common trope in all American biography at the time. Ethan Allen, Benjamin Franklin and John Paul Jones are only a few of the memoirists who described their rise to the top from underprivileged origins. Even George Washington, the son of a wealthy planter, was described as an orphan denied his father’s guidance in Weems’s biography (13-4). The image of the American as a plucky young man making his way through the world by relying on grit and ingenuity was a part of our cultural mythology as early as Allen’s narrative in 1779. Allen’s narrative also emphasized the American as a frontiersman, a motif carried in many of the national spy narratives. As a captivity narrative, Allen’s memoir not only underscores the perceived cruelty of the English toward the Americans, both as prisoners and as colonists, but also the fortitude of the American in the face of deprivation. Although the American victory resulted in no need for martyrs, the depiction of America as the underdog nation which could overcome tremendous obstacles with pluck and resilience required some examples of obstacles. The 1807 Walpole edition of Allen’s narrative, while acknowledging that the United States was currently at peace with England, sees the narrative as an “inducement” to Americans “to imitate the coolness and courage of the deceased veteran” in all endeavors (Allen 1-2). While a variety of reasons propel the narratives that emerged after the war, each narrative strives to establish its memoirist as an American character from whom future Americans can learn.

Two Loyalists: Two Ends of the Colonial Spectrum

Given the variety of motives for memoirs, it is surprising, however, how comparable are the memoirists' notions of the reasons for military activity and its attendant espionage, impressions of the new government of the United States, and definitions of themselves as Americans, regardless of which side of the conflict they supported. Because the English pension system was established so much earlier than the American, the first spy memoirs to come from the American Revolution were from American loyalists who served in the British army as spies and soldiers. Two of these memoirs, those of John Connolly and James Moody, demonstrate the difference between viewing America as a small piece of the British empire, and viewing America as home: the difference between the imperial view and the colonists' view. The colonists' view, by seeing America as home and distinct from England, reflects the nascent nationalism of the colonies, even if the colonists didn't really want to overturn British rule.

John Connolly's narrative illustrates the imperialist perspective. Connolly had a great deal of time in the British service prior to the Revolution. He had served in Martinique and the Indian campaigns from 1762-1764. He returned to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he married, before going to Kaskaskia where he studied the Indians and their languages for three years. He returned to Pittsburgh briefly, before moving west again, this time to establish a settlement in Augusta County of what would be western Pennsylvania, having received from Lord Dunmore, the governor of Virginia, a grant for the land. Both Pennsylvania and Virginia claimed the area at the time, and Connolly fanned the flames of intercolonial conflict by appealing to Virginia for support and attempting to enforce the Virginia fur tax. As result of his loyalty, Dunmore commissioned Connolly militia captain and commandant of Fort Pitt. After some disputes between the Indians and the settlers in 1774, he led the local militia effort in Dunmore's War, the war between the settlers and the united Delaware and Iroquois that resulted. As a result of his command, he continued acting in his majesty's service as an Indian agent under Lord Dunmore. As the revolution heated up after the Battle of Bunker's Hill, Lord Dunmore urged Connolly to disband the militia and return the Indian prisoners of war after convening a treaty, and "endeavor[ing] to incline them to espouse the royal cause" (6). Connolly succeeded in his endeavor, with a success which terrified the Americans. Lacking a role in the emerging

conflict, and officially no longer the commander of a militia at British military request, he attempted to contact Lord Dunmore. On the way, he was arrested for attempting to levy a Tory militia and was marched toward Philadelphia to answer to Congress. Before he left the area, however, his disbanded militia reformed to force his release. His freedom was short-lived when he encountered three magistrates whom he had arrested before for overstepping their authority. They decided to return the favor. Again the militia forced Connolly's release.

Recognizing that reaching Dunmore without stratagem may prove difficult, he traveled under the business of having the treaty with the Delaware and Iroquois approved in Richmond, accompanied by three Chiefs. The commission, pleased with the treaty, allayed some of the local concern regarding Connolly until he refused to participate in "inflammatory and unconstitutional toasts" (14). Despite his refusal, he eventually made contact with Lord Dunmore, enjoying the company of "a Nobleman, whose loyal sentiments corresponded with my own, and who made it an invariable rule never to suffer those who preferred their allegiance to the vain applause of a giddy multitude, to pass undistinguished" (15). After informing Dunmore of his loyalist and Indian confederacy, he traveled to Boston to meet with General Gage for approval of his efforts and further instruction. Gage approved, and asked him to carry messages to the officers commanding at Illinois and Detroit. In 1775 he was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in his majesty's service to raise a battalion and as many separate companies as possible (19). Before he could, he must travel back to Detroit, from Richmond. On the way, he and his travelling partners were captured, and later he was charged with spying, a charge Connolly hotly denied on the basis of the impossibility of committing espionage: "I was the King's commissioned officer, taken in the execution of my duty, to a sovereign, at that time, acknowledged by themselves. America was not a separate state; no independency [sic] was declared; no penal laws promulgated. Neither was there anything to spy" (43). However, that denial did not address the chief basis for the charge: that he was not at arms, yet he traveled with messages from Gage. Eventually, after a long imprisonment, interspersed with paroles (in which he plotted to take Pittsburgh), illness (including cholera), and much indignation at his treatment, he was exchanged and joined Cornwallis in Yorktown. Captured again, he was released in March 1782 to sail to England. In England, he

published his memoirs and was granted half-pay and seven hundred eighty-three pounds for claims, coming to six thousand, six hundred fifty pounds. He returned to North America in 1788 and attempted to negotiate a deal with Kentucky to open the Mississippi if Kentucky would pledge allegiance to England. That attempt having failed, he returned to Canada where he served as superintendent of Indian affairs until 1800 when the appointment was cancelled. He died in 1813.

Connolly's exploration of the frontier is clearly the exploration of one looking to expand the British sphere of influence rather than someone looking for more farmland. Connolly explains that he moved to the frontier of the time and lived among the Native Americans in order to study their customs, because he was "animated by a strong desire to make [himself] worthy to serve [his] King and country on future occasions" (2). While Connolly's long imprisonment, essentially during the entire war, could have contributed to his indignation at what he saw as American usurpation of British sovereignty, his underlying attitude toward the country, the government, the extension of the frontier, and the management of the Native Americans suggests an imperial view of Britain's role in America. Indeed Nicholas Cresswell described him, while commandant at Fort Pitt, as a "haughty, imperious man" (qtd. in Buck 189). Connolly sees himself as part of the ruling class. He does not relate the typical stories of pioneers creating homes in the wilderness, but instead identifies the establishment of governmental structure and treaty negotiations. Unlike most American memoirists, he never discusses his personal life, for he dedicates his entire life to serving the king. Indeed, the memoir is remarkable among American memoirs as relating almost nothing about his family, aside from a single sentence in which he says he was born "of respectable parents" (1). He makes no mention of either his first or second wife, nor of his children. He takes great pains to establish his position as leader of the settlement and commander of the militia, and as the impartial arbiter of disputes between the settlers and the American Indians. Unlike other narratives which include exploits on the frontier with Native Americans, Connolly's does not regard the Native Americans as a threat to the American homeland, but as a group of people, like the settlers, that the British must justly and disinterestedly govern. Likewise, his reaction to the charge of spying reveals a different perspective from that of Moody and other American memoirists. While his denial of spying activity reveals a touch of class-conscious revulsion at the idea that he, an officer in the

British service, would do something as disreputable as spying, it also refutes the contention that anything he, as an officer of the rightful government, could do would constitute spying since spying occurs when one lawful government attempts to steal the lawful secrets of another government. The Americans, a rebellious gang of outlaws, have as much right to hide information from legal authorities as a gang of street thugs. Although Connolly was born in America, he identified most strongly with the British rule in America, perhaps as a result of his early service in the French and Indian war. As such, the memoir provides a point of contrast to the American understanding of spying and national service. Connolly is more akin to a member of the colonial government than to the typical American spy.

In contrast, James Moody, although he served the British army, wrote the first strikingly American spy memoir from the perspective of a settler rather than that of an imperial servant. Moody apparently continued to think of himself as American after the war, choosing to settle in Canada. Moody's narrative, *Lieutenant James Moody's Narrative of His Exertions and Sufferings in the Cause of the Government Since the Year 1776* (1782), communicates the conflicted position of an American supporter of the British empire and effectively illustrates the connection of spy memoirs to American settlers' literature and the relation between American spy literature and postcolonial identity.

Moody, although an American loyalist who published his memoirs in London (they were later published in New York in 1865), depicts the American Revolutionary spy as a prototypical Jacksonian American. A native of New Jersey, he rebelled against the local requirement to swear allegiance to the American cause, thus incurring harassment and abuse from the local Committee of Safety. In 1777, he led a party of seventy-four of his loyalist neighbors to join General Cortlandt Skinner's brigade as volunteers. As a member of the brigade, he led scouting parties, missions to intercept mail traffic, sabotage missions, recruiting drives, kidnapping expeditions and missions to steal American plans, including one that attempted to burgle the State House in Philadelphia, now better known as Independence Hall, the seat of the Continental Congress. In addition, leading small parties, he captured an amazing number of Continental troops and American political leaders, including one expedition in which, with a party of seven men, he captured eighteen committeemen and militia officers. He was captured by General Anthony Wayne's party

while attempting to return to New York in July 1780. After suffering from mistreatment under General Benedict Arnold's command of West Point and its prison, he was placed in looser manacles, but close guard, under General Washington's command. Upon hearing that he would face court-martial and, if convicted, execution, he managed to escape. He ran several more missions, including the ill-fated State House plan before, at Sir Henry Clinton's urging, he sailed to England. By the time he left for England at the end of 1781, he had been commissioned an ensign (1779) and promoted to lieutenant in the British army (July 1781). In 1782, the English Treasury awarded him a pension of one hundred pounds a year for his services. After he had published memoirs in 1782, the commissioners on Loyalist claims granted his full claim of one thousand, three hundred thirty pounds. He returned to North America, settling in Nova Scotia in 1786 where he served in the militia, attaining the rank of colonel. (Siebert 106; Bakeless 272-5; Moody).

Moody's story, as a Loyalist seeking to preserve British rule of the colonies, seems as if it should run counter to an American self-identity as a freedom loving individualist who strikes his own mark against corrupt and tyrannical government. On the contrary, his narrative embodies that American identity, as he depicts the Rebel government as the one guilty of tyranny and oppressing freedom. As in any conflict, the definitions of "freedom" and "tyranny" depend greatly upon one's side of the political debate, but Moody's narrative seems strikingly "American." Moody identifies his entrance into the struggle as an attempt to protect his home and family from abusive governmental harassment and to preserve his country's constitution from outside aggressors (2-3). Indeed, his first mission was to harass the rebel troops in his neighborhood. Moody, as a man inclined toward establishing roots and a family, not only fits the standard depiction of the American sentimental hero in the nineteenth-century, but also the depiction of later American spies. *The Spy*'s Harvey Birch, as celibate loner, would become an exception to what would emerge as the standard American heroic spy: a morally grounded man who either has a family or will have shortly after the story ends. The emphasis of the personal nature of the war, as compared to an exercise in implementing governmental policy or protecting the greater British empire, places Moody's reason for spying in accord with American justification of spy activities as a way of waging war against a force endangering the nation rather than with British spying activity as a way to preserve the empire. Even though

Moody acts to preserve British rule in America, he does so not because his actions will benefit the British empire but because they will benefit America. He cares little for the king (whom he mentions only once in a perfunctory manner [18]), but a great deal for his homeland.

Like other American spy protagonists, Moody is a farmer whose entry into the war resulted from a desire to protect his land and his family. He also evokes the individualist frontiersman in his language describing his spy missions. He generally acted alone or with very small parties entering "the Rebel Country" (13), which is depicted as at least as dangerous as the "Indian Country" of Daniel Boone narratives, to perform feats of amazing daring and potentially devastating consequences. Not only did he spy on Washington's troops, and gain the exact account of General Sullivan's plans for expeditions against the Indians, he also gathered information directly from Washington's accounting books (13). Although the guerilla nature of the war makes such individual heroics more common than they might have been in earlier wars between well-trained European armies, Moody's accomplishments as a lone, and surprisingly autonomous, agent are remarkable.

Moody also demonstrates some of the similarities of the spy to the confidence man. Like the confidence man, spies live by their wits cheating people who deserve to be cheated, but the spy does so for the good of the country rather than the good of his pocketbook. David Mauer notes that one of the initial necessary conditions for a successful "con" is that the victim is willing to make money by illegal means (3-4). The victim, who is guilty of an intent to break the law, is less likely to inform on the confidence man. Spy stories, whether because of the enemy's mistaken politics or individual cruelty (or both), depict the enemy as one who deserves whatever questionable action the spy takes. Because the spy works patriotically for the benefit of the nation, the ends justify the means.

Moody, supported by four men, bluffs his way past a troop of twelve rebels by calling an advance as if he had many more soldiers behind him (40). In another, bolder instance, he attempts to bluff his way into a prison holding several Tories by pretending to be a jailer who had just captured the notorious Moody. Although the guard seems convinced, he will not disobey orders to keep the jail locked until sunrise. This plan having backfired, Moody convinced the guard, aided by the mimicry skills of his men, that he is

accompanied by several Indian warriors, a tactic which proved effective and enabled him to release all the prisoners (14-18).⁵⁰ In these cases, and others, he displays not only a remarkable ability to tell outrageous lies convincingly, but also the ability to escape precarious situations through his ability to think quickly, a weapon which enables him to overcome superior forces with very little support.

But unlike the confidence man, Moody continually reminds his audience of the moral rightness of his cause. Prior to the prison break scene, he describes the plight of the prisoners at the hands of the merciless rebels. One prisoner's case is particularly pathetic:

This poor fellow was one of Burgoyne's soldiers, charged with crimes of a civil nature, of which, however, he was generally believed to be innocent. But when a clergyman of the Church of England interposed with his unrelenting prosecutor, and warmly urged this plea of innocence, he was sharply told, that, though he might not perhaps deserve to die for the crime for which he had been committed, there could be no doubt that he deserved to die, as an enemy to America. (15)

Few could justify the clear miscarriage of justice of such a sentence. Although Moody does not proclaim his morality as an outside biographer might, this passage and others subtly remind the reader that Moody's actions, while employing deception, trickery, and other violations of truth, not to mention the homicide that accompanies war, are morally justified as means to right the wrongs of the enemy. As such, the duplicity of lying, or not telling the whole truth, is not the criminal and morally reprehensible action of a confidence artist, but the ingenuity and cleverness of a patriot.

Given the moral righteousness of his actions, Britain's negotiations to end the conflict amount to betrayal of the principles of justice and liberty from roaming marauders. Moody's outrage at the impending peace talks and their implied negation of his sacrifices for a cause the British government willingly abandons reveals the conviction of a moral crusade:

It is with the utmost concern Mr. Moody has heard of the doubts and debates that have been agitated in England concerning the number and seal of the Loyalists in America. It might be uncharitable, and possibly unjust, to say that every man who has entertained such doubts, has

some sinister purposes to serve by them; but it would be blindness in the extreme not to see, that they were first raised by men who had other objects at heart than the interests of the country. Men who have performed their own duty feebly or falsely, naturally seek to excuse themselves by throwing the blame on others....

Perhaps the honest indignation of the Writer may have carried him too far; but, on such a subject, who, in *his* circumstances, could speak coolly, and with any temper? That he speaks only what he really thinks, no man, who is acquainted with him, will doubt; and if, after all, he is mistaken, he errs with more and better opportunities of being right, than almost any other person has ever had. He has given the strongest proofs of his sincerity: he has sacrificed his all; and, little as it may be thought by others, it was enough for him, and he was contented with it. He made this sacrifice, because he sincerely believed what he declares and professes. If the same were to do over again, he would again as cheerfully make the same sacrifice....The profession of arms is foreign from the habits of one who has lived, and wishes only to live, in quiet, under his own vine and his own fig-tree; and he can truly say, that, if his Sovereign should be graciously pleased to confer on him the highest military honors, he would most gladly forego them to be once more re-instated in his own farm, with his wife and children around him, as he was seven years ago. (54-6)

Moody's dismay reflects a particularly early American view of war and the military. Moody apparently views war as necessary only for the protection of home and hearth, and values sacrifice, conviction, and acting on one's noble principles. He portrays himself as a reluctant soldier of a civil war who entered the war as a result of its moral necessity and is dismayed by watching the government capitulate to the other side. One could imagine an Ulster Unionist making a similar speech in reaction to British peace talks with Sinn Fein. If the typical British spy story reflects political anxiety about the end of empire, this speech demonstrates a personal anxiety about the end of empire for the former colonial settlers and their disillusionment by the government they sacrificed so much to preserve. It demonstrates a distrust of the government and politicians and career military men who wish to save face and for whom the war was a

protection not of homeland, but of international prestige. This speech reflects the attitudes of a heroic spy, although one on the losing side.

Moody's strong identification with America as a colonial settler contrasts sharply with his fellow loyalist, John Connolly who, as a career officer in His Majesty's Service, reflects a much greater concern for the preservation of the British empire than for the fate of the colonies. Connolly's narrative focuses on the impropriety of the American government, rather than its actions endangering his homeland or the country. America as a nation does not exist, and Connolly, the rootless servant to the king, appears to have no attachment to a notion of home, but is motivated instead by a fierce loyalty to the king. Connolly would never have questioned the wisdom of abandoning the colonies.

DeBerniere and the Literary Hoax

Another British spy journal circulated in America during the Revolution, but its focus differs from both Connolly's and Moody's. Unlike those narratives, the journal of Ensign Henry DeBerniere, a British officer assigned to the infantry's 10th Regiment, was not intended for publication or even an outside reader. *General Gage's Instructions* and the accompanying journal of Ensign DeBerniere of the espionage expedition he took with Captain William Brown of the 52nd Regiment in 1775 were published after being left behind during the British evacuation of Boston. J. Gill published them in 1779, "for the information and amusement of the curious" (DeBerniere 1). It probably provided substantial amusement to an early American audience, particularly a Massachusetts one, for it recounts the misadventures of DeBerniere and Brown, demonstrating more than anything else their clumsiness at disguise and the Americans' skill at discovering British spies. Like many military spies employed during the war, neither were "professional" spies with training in espionage. Foot officers, they were selected by Gage for a special duty assignment to explore the terrain and make maps of Suffolk and Worcester counties [Massachusetts] 22 February 1775. Posing as surveyors dressed in brown and red "country clothes," they set off, taking Captain Brown's servant, John, with them. Reasonably successful, they achieved their objective by returning unharmed with a report and a map which historian Allen French argues, despite certain topographical errors, is one of the best

for providing a personal understanding the war (748).⁵¹ But the expedition wasn't a total success. On their very first stop, they were recognized by the black waitress at the inn. Indeed, she not only knew that they were not who they claim to be and that they were British officers, but she also knew Brown's name, for she had seen them in Boston five years before. They leave quickly, but their attempts at disguise weren't much more successful, despite treating John "as [their] companion," rather than as a servant (7). Everywhere they stopped, even when at the house of "friends of government" (Tory sympathizers), they were recognized as British officers, despite nonchalant attempts to deny their identity. Apparently everyone in Massachusetts knew not only their identities, but also their destination. Although they gathered the information they sought—several sketches and a good knowledge of the surrounding countryside—one could not call their mission a rousing success as far as blending into the background. It seemed that the only people their disguises fool were the British troops. When they return, Gage and General Haldiman do not recognize them "until we discovered ourselves" (14). The intrepid trio set out again a month later to canvas the route to Concord, where again they caused a stir in the town among the patriots who threatened to tar and feather their host.

In and of itself, the twenty page military journal adds little to our understanding of the spy narrative as a genre, since it was never intended for publication. The only person who likely benefited from its publication was the publisher J. Gill. However, as Daniel E. Williams demonstrates, the narrative gave rise to one of the classic hoaxes of early American literature, *The Journal of Mr. John Howe while He was Employed as a British Spy During the Revolutionary War; also while He was Engaged in the Smuggling Business During the Late War*, published by Luther Roby in 1827.⁵² *The Journal* deserves a prominent place in the canon of American spy fictional literature. Howe is the prototypical American self-made man and confidence artist, working, once Colonel Smith his original partner leaves, on his own. Not merely content to gather topographical data, Howe collects HUMINT (human intelligence) as he befriends patrons of pubs and people he meets along the way. As with fictional spy stories, the actual intelligence collected is less important than the method of collection. The only actual intelligence we learn is that the local Tories are well-known and quite hounded, and that there was a large network of scouts in the area,⁵³ neither of which

are news and both of which put forward a view of a very active American citizenry policing its homeland. Rather than masquerade as the suspicious trade of surveyor,⁵⁴ Howe claims to be a farmer as well as a gunsmith (7), appealing to New England work ethics and the American preference for production related occupations. Out of contact with his unit for six days, he returns to camp to the praise of his commander, General Gage. Just before the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Howe is sent out to survey the area toward Salem, in particular the towns east of Concord. While on the road he spreads the word to the locals that the British are coming, claiming the cry is a cover so “no person mistrusted but what I was a faithful American”(26). Upon returning, he decides to join the Americans, and finally breaks away from the British on 10 May, on the pretext of spying in Rhode Island and Connecticut (27).

Once he joins the Americans, he disappears from the text, as another narrative voice states that to trace Mr. Howe through the Revolutionary War would be too hard a task, as we find his writings very much worn and out of order, but suffice it to say, that he served through the whole of the war, between America and Great Britain; he was faithful to that cause of liberty; he possessed undaunted courage; he was quick and cunning; ready to go on any expedition by night or by day, notwithstanding his situation as a prisoner, which, had he been taken, must have meant death without mercy. But few men have done more in the American cause than Mr. Howe. (28)

We learn that he moves West to trade in furs, preach to the Indians, and live the frontier life. Along the way he marries the widow of a military officer killed by the Indians who has a fifteen year old son. We read soon after that Mr. Howe's wife dies (after half a page which describe Howe's activities as a spy on the Indians for the government) and the son conveniently decides to pursue his fortune in “the Spanish trade” (29). The narrative voice slips between third and first person in this transition period, but the arrogantly confident voice of Howe returns as a soldier in the War of 1812 under General Hull, for whom he spies again until Hull delivers Howe and the rest of the fort at Detroit as prisoners to the British. Betrayed by the American government, Howe takes up smuggling, highlighting the similarities between spying and confidence gaming.

The remainder of the narrative recounts his exploits using disguise, technological ingenuity, and audacity to outwit the American custom house agents.

The text is as much as an American fictional spy story as Cooper's *The Spy*, only in the form of a memoir rather than a historical romance. Disguise, distrust of the military (and the government as a whole), individual inventiveness and derring-do, and social conservatism figure prominently in the journal. As in *The Spy*, much depends on Mr. Howe's ability to disguise himself and his motives, especially since he, more than the DeBerniere party, needs to gain the trust of the townspeople to gain the information he seeks. DeBerniere's party would have been happiest had they encountered no one and been allowed to make their maps and sketches in peace. Howe, on the other hand, thrives on the confidence games of collecting information from others and, in peacetime, smuggling. His bag of "Yankee tricks" includes posing as a rebel to get directions to a prominent Tory's house, and playing on a custom officer's fear of the spotted fever to get past the customs house by passing two boys sick on alcohol as sick with the spotted fever. Indeed, the entire journal is a con. Considerably more than Harvey Birch, Howe acts as a free agent. After Colonel Smith, the same Colonel Smith who led the attack on Lexington,⁵⁵ runs away from a serving woman who threatens to expose him, Howe continues entirely on his own, wandering the countryside for at least six days prior to returning to camp. On the basis of two missions (both unsupervised), Gage grants him his request to explore Rhode Island and Connecticut. Indeed, Howe never acts under direct supervision in the narrative; we hear about his adventures during the remainder of the Revolution and the War of 1812 third hand in a brief paragraph. Only when he acts as an independent smuggler does he regain control of the narrative.

His distrust of the military (both sides, during both wars) and the government is profound. Not only does he depict the British officers as drunken dupes taken in by his wit, but he accuses the American commanders, as exemplified by General Hull, of practicing "Yankee tricks" by failing to protect their troops from the enemy, and delivering our hero into the hands of the British, exposing him to the possibility of execution, had his activities as a spy been exposed. Howe's choice of Hull as the representative commander of the War of 1812 suggests a certain cynicism about the war and the practicality of a standing army. For surrendering to the British, Hull, a much decorated veteran of the Revolution, was court-martialed and would

have been sentenced to death had it not been for his prior service and advanced age. Were the memoir fact, one could credit Howe's serving under Hull to coincidence; however, the *Roster of Ohio Soldiers in the War of 1812*, which includes those who served under Hull in Detroit, shows no record of a John Howe.⁵⁶ In addition, *The Capitulation; or A History of the Expedition Conducted by William Hull, Brigadier General of the Northwestern Army* (1812) by "An Ohio Volunteer" (presumed to be James Foster) not only makes no mention of Howe, but also suggests that Hull's spies were quite well organized under the command of Captain McCulloch, "the intrepid and patriotic commander of the spies" (270), who is not, nor are any other spies, mentioned in Howe's narrative. The character presented in the narrative likely would have chafed under so much organization and its implied supervision.

After Hull's actions, Howe feels no duty to serve out the remainder of the war once he escapes from the British (an escape that he does not describe), and embarks on a new career as a smuggler. Unlike Cooper's narrative, Howe's narrative attacks civilian peacetime government officials, in particular customs officers who collect taxes and otherwise impede the ability of an enterprising man to make money. The narrative resembles nothing as much as an American confidence man's memoir. Like the American confidence man, Stephen Burroughs, whose very popular narrative *The Memoir of the Notorious Stephen Burroughs* (1798) demonstrates America's early fascination with criminals who outwit governmental authorities, Howe pretends to be victimized by the law. Like Burroughs, who assumes an air of injured innocence when local magistrates want to prosecute him for counterfeiting, Howe indignantly exclaims that the customs officials are playing "Yankee tricks" when an agent of the officer he bribed confiscates his smuggled goods (32). Just as Burroughs downplays the fact that he did indeed break the law, Howe neglects to recognize that his entire narrative recounts the Yankee tricks he plays upon others, emphasizing instead that many people living near the border of Canada not only approved of his actions, but often smuggled themselves. When not smuggling, Howe seems to be happiest on the frontier, preaching to (and swindling) the American Indians, far from the reaches of civil law. While Harvey Birch exists on the margins of society to serve George Washington, but does not enjoy his exile from society, Howe actively seeks the margins of

society, coming into contact with society only to exercise his wiles by outwitting both the lowest of society (the African Americans and American Indians) and the ruling authority (government agents).

To a larger extent than *The Spy*, the narrative is both a postcolonial and a colonizing text. American values, identified as distinct from British ones, of liberty, freedom, and the power of the individual, surface repeatedly, and the British soldiers prove unarmed in Howe's battle of wits. The motives for our hero's conversion are sketchily explained, but once he deserts, he becomes paragon of patriotism. As a colonizing narrative, the journal focuses on racial difference, depicting the Indians as "savage" beings who routinely "torture and murder" (31) and blacks as foolish and superstitious cowards who routinely tell lies (at one point Howe says that the local gossip about a British campaign to Worcester "turned out to be Negro stories" [43]).⁵⁷ Our hero, a white shape-shifter, easily converses with people of all socio-economic groups, diminishing the class distinctions of DeBerniere's text, in keeping with America's denial of social distinction and demonstrating the democratic nature of an American hero as one who can adapt to the mutability of American society. Although populist in its diminished class distinctions of whites, and its denunciation of repressive government, like import/export laws, it affirms a rigid social hierarchy between the races and immigrant groups. The only Irishman acts as Howe's employee, and is referred to as "my Irishman" (34). He acts as a prototypical "Q" of James Bond fame, creating a technically intricate smuggling sleigh, as well as a fake coffin complete with corpse head, and as Howe's accomplice in a smuggling job that required dressing in drag (43).

Howe's use of the term "Yankee tricks" reveals a certain ambivalence about the term "Yankee" which can be taken as an insult, as the British used it, or as a point of national pride, as Ethan Allen uses it in his memoir (Allen 44). To describe Hull's cowardice, which Howe and many others took as perfidy, and custom officers' underhanded means to enforce the law (the breaking of the law by accepting bribes is not condemned) as "Yankee tricks" suggests not only a distrust of American governmental agencies, but one distinct from the distrust of the former British government. Howe's use of "Yankee tricks" also renounces the term "Yankee" as one acceptable for national identification by identifying it with duplicitous action by the government which, in Howe's view, prevents the individual from exercising his rights to life, liberty, and

the pursuit of property. Of course the term may also be used in connection with governmental officials as indicative of the American character, and as a cynical comment on the efficacy of a government staffed by people as duplicitous and skilled in the practice of “Yankee tricks” as Howe. It is difficult to determine how seriously the author intends the reader to take Howe. Outrageously anti-government, almost to the point of anarchic, and ever-searching for lots of easy money regardless of the law, he seems too extreme to take seriously, although several twentieth-century historians have.

The narrative defies easy genre classification. Although written as a memoir (not a journal, despite the title), it does not seem to have been inspired by the memoirs written for pension claims. Unlike those, it does not emphasize the memoirist’s sacrifices in the war, nor his resulting disability.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the 1820s also saw many narratives published not for reasons of collecting a pension, but to preserve the memory of American patriots. *Niles’ Weekly Register*, among other newspapers, often bemoaned the decrease of increasing numbers of America’s “heroes and sages of the revolutionary period” (“Our Fathers” 34), and published stories of military bravery among average soldiers. Still, also unlike those, Howe’s narrative provides no specifics of Howe’s actual service in the war—only that before he joined the American side, and later, after he escaped from the British during the War of 1812. In fact, we hear absolutely nothing of any action, aside from a little spying, that Howe took during that war.

The fanciful nature of the fiction defies full acceptance of the narrative as fact, yet it contains enough historical detail (much of it from the DeBerniere narrative) and geographical detail that it smacks of authenticity. In addition, Howe’s utter independence, his bravado, and wit appeal to the American ideal of the rugged individualist which had taken hold of the country in the 1820s. The anti-government nature of the narrative not only reflects the long history of real anti-government anxiety after the Revolution, as exemplified by the Shays Rebellion in Massachusetts (1786-1787) and the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania (1794), as well as the unpopularity of the War of 1812, it also reflects the emergence of the populism of Jacksonian democracy which distrusted established institutions and strict economic class distinctions for whites. Although the narrative dismisses the British officers as drunken fops, it does not suggest that England posed a real threat to American independence and individual American enterprise. That

threat comes from the American governmental agents in the narrative. Although the journal was published a few years before Andrew Jackson took office as President, its Jacksonian individual ideal was already taking shape in Filson's narrative of Daniel Boone and other frontier explorers' narratives. Jackson gave the model a name, but the character type was already popular in American culture. As such, Howe's narrative provides a sort of wish fulfillment; we wish that such daring individuals could operate and thrive in the increasingly civilized American culture, so we begin to identify with such characters. Although modern American spy novels take a form closer to the historical romance, their characters more often resemble Howe than Birch.

Enoch Crosby: The "Spy Unmasked"

Fiction and non-fiction blended even in the more legitimate memoirs, like that of Enoch Crosby. H.L. Barnum not only transcribed Crosby's narrative of his days as a spy during the Revolution, he also shaped the narrative to correspond to Cooper's novel in order to capitalize on his claim that Crosby was the real Harvey Birch, or as his title proclaims *The Spy Unmasked* (1828). Enoch Crosby, while serving a six month enlistment in the army, was wounded during an attack on St. John's in Canada. Although he returned to join the army in taking Montreal (12 November 1775), he returned home to Westchester County, New York, after his enlistment expired to recuperate fully. One day while walking in the area, in September, 1776, he fell into a conversation with a man who, misinterpreting one of Crosby's remarks, assumed that Crosby was a fellow Tory. Crosby allowed the man to assume so and to tell him about a Tory militia group that was forming. Crosby then told his new friend that he was interested in joining such a group, so the man made the appropriate introductions. After remaining among them for three days, Crosby left his new acquaintances, and told a local Whig activist of his information, whereupon he was introduced to John Jay and the rest of the Committee of Safety. The committee acted upon Crosby's information by having him travel with a detachment of Rangers to the militia's meeting place in order to arrest them. After the operation, the committee requested Crosby to perform similar infiltration missions around New York State. Crosby proved quite effective, infiltrating and exposing three Tory militia groups before the Tories recognized his part in the militia groups' arrest. His miraculous escapes from capture three times fueled their

suspensions, but those escapes also caused him some anxiety from Whig soldiers as well until he revealed his written orders from Jay. His spy career came to an end after a brutal beating by a party of Tories who came to his brother-in-law's house (where he was staying) during the middle of the night and beat both Crosby and his brother-in-law to bloody pulps. After recovering from his beating, he joined the army again, serving under Major General Nathaniel Greene.

Crosby's missions do not correspond to many of Birch's adventures, in part because Cooper was less interested in the actual business of spying than in the idea of a spy: Harvey does less spying than wandering around the country as a suspected spy. As James H. Pickering notes in his introduction to *The Spy*, however, Crosby's missions do correspond to the tale Jay told Cooper about the spy who would hunt out Tory militia groups and expose them to the New York Committee of Safety (*The Spy* XXVIa). Despite Barnum's labored efforts to draw connections between Crosby and Birch, and to pad the interesting, although slight, tale to acceptable book length by repeating the histories of Washington's battles (and thus draw a Birch-like connection between Washington and Crosby where none existed), Crosby's exploits make for an exciting tale of a man who used his wits to infiltrate, inform on, and then escape from several Tory militia groups. Crosby's employers, the Committee of Safety, recall Cooper's Washington/Harper character in their function as an oversight committee which can provide some, but not full, protection to their spy. However, unlike Birch, Crosby did not regard them with pious reverence.

Barnum's transcription of Crosby's narrative is one of the first examples of a later generation editor to retell the spy's story to give it greater relevance to the history of the American Revolution.⁵⁹ It reveals the later generation's desire to preserve the accounts of the first patriots many of whom had already died as the new nation celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and the anxiety that all events of the revolution must be seen as an organic whole leading to the predestined founding of the United States. Although Crosby was quite young during the early debates about the stamp tax and subsequent British action which ignited American dissatisfaction with the crown, Barnum includes a scene in which Crosby's father, a good Whig, debates the rest of the town, including a minister, about the legitimacy of England's governance of America. Every time a famous American name, like General Montgomery, crosses Crosby's narrative, Barnum includes long

passages from other historical works (he is particularly fond of Mercy Otis Warren's history) about the famous personage. Even though Crosby never comes into contact with Nathan Hale, and was on guard duty during André's execution, thus unable to accompany the party from his company who went to watch, Barnum includes the stories of both spies to link Crosby to the better known spies of American history.

Barnum's narrative also reveals a desire to see all American action as virtuous and all British action as culpable. Barnum routinely labels the Tory militia groups as "vile conspirators," yet, in fairness, one could point out that by upholding the legal government of Great Britain they were less conspiratorial than the Committee of Safety. From reading Crosby's exploits and other tales of the Committee of Safety's policing of the area, one could understand James Moody's resentment of the intrusiveness of the newly appointed Committee which, although supportive of what would become a democratic republic, was neither democratically selected, nor even necessarily representative of the will of the New York populace. Barnum recounts the treason of a mole, Lieutenant-Colonel Ledwitz of the Continental army who joined the army "by his own solicitation" (51), yet exposed its secrets to the Royal Governor of New York, Tyron. "By this criminal act," Barnum states, "the perfidious wretch had forfeited his life, according to the articles of war; but, on his trial by a court-martial, his life was saved by the casting vote of a militia officer, who pretended some *scruples of conscience!*" (51, author's emphasis). Not only does Barnum cast the darkest cloud possible over Ledwitz, he also denounces the officer who did not find Ledwitz guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Since Barnum does not recount the evidence against Ledwitz, the reader cannot judge properly the unnamed militia officer's decision. Despite the lack of evidence, Barnum indignantly equates the officer's "not guilty" vote to Ledwitz's alleged treason. What is particularly striking about the passage, included as it is in a narrative about an American who played mole (though on a lesser scale) to successive Tory groups, is its lack of irony.

Not only does Barnum refuse to see any parallels between Crosby's actions and Ledwitz's, he takes pains to distance Crosby as much as possible from the ignominious occupation of spy. In the initial interview between Crosby and the committee, the chairman says:

“It cannot be disguised that, in the service now proposed to you, even honour, in the general acceptance of that term among men, must also be sacrificed; but not so in the eye of that Being who reads the secret thoughts of the heart, and *judges the motives instead of the act*. He will approve, though man may condemn”

[Crosby answers,] “It is, indeed, a hazardous part you would have me play. I must become a Spy.”

“In appearance only. Our bleeding country requires such service at this momentous crisis.

We must fight our secret foes with their own weapons; and he who will magnanimously step forward as a volunteer in that service, will merit a rich reward—and receive it, too, from Heaven, if not from man. If he falls, he falls a martyr in the glorious cause of liberty.” (61-2 my emphasis)

Not only does this passage reinforce the standard justification for spying that the ends justify the means, imparting to God a similar equivocation about the committing of less than upright actions, provided the motives were good, it also goes so far as to say that someone who commits the acts of a spy—infiltrating and exposing enemy operations—is not a spy if he’s one of the good guys. The chairman’s language suggests that far more of this conversation came from Barnum’s imagination than Crosby’s memory,⁶⁰ revealing Barnum’s contemporary squeamishness about the morality of spying when identified as such.

Barnum was also apparently squeamish about the suitability of a humble, largely uneducated farmer narrating a tale of such historical import. Like many other transcribers and editors, he took pains to establish the authenticity of the tale, although in this case, his claim rests partially on the false assertion that “a gentleman of good standing and respectability, who has filled honourable official stations in the county of Westchester, and who has long enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Mr. Cooper, informed the writer of this article, *on the authority of Mr. Cooper himself*, that the *outline* of the character of Harvey Birch, was actually sketched from that of ENOCH CROSBY” (2 original emphasis). While such a gentleman may have said such things, the claim was denounced by Cooper who said he had never met Crosby, and that the character was based solely upon a spy described by Jay. What appears to bother Barnum more is Crosby’s language which is “catechetical colloquy: the style of which is seldom sufficiently *accurate*, or *elevated* for

the page of history” (xiv my emphasis). One wonders, of course, if Crosby’s language is not accurate enough for history, how Barnum did fix the inaccuracies that Crosby would have communicated to him, without his actually being there. Elevated language seemed to be a common concern of the professional publishers, writers, and editors who took these humble narratives in order to transform them into the weighty stuff of a national history that demonstrated the highest moral ideals of a melodramatic and teleological view of history that not only assumed the inevitableness of America’s founding but also its continually expanding greatness.

Collins: The Spy during and after the War

Similar concerns apparently plague John M. Roberts, the editor of James Collins’s humble autobiography *A Revolutionary Soldier*. Originally written by Collins for his children in 1836, it was later published with a preface by Roberts in 1859. Collins’s style is simple and plain, laying out his adventures as a member of the army and a sometime spy with the same bluntness he later uses to describe his adventures on the frontier. He began his military career at the age of sixteen as a spy for the local South Carolina militia, travelling to local towns on some cover business, like looking for a lost horse, while he listened to the conversation to gather information on local Tory activity. After a few successful missions, and some close escapes, Collins volunteered for Colonel Moffitt’s militia (along with his father), occasionally slipping back into his role as spy. His accounts of his activities are detailed though unadorned with boasting, aside from repeated praise, such as Colonel Moffitt’s comment regarding his spying success, “Well James, we shall have plenty for you to do, and two or three more such, if they could all have as good luck as you. We will try to take care of you and not let the Tories catch you” (25). Although Collins’s narrative lacks the bravado and the audacity of Howe’s narrative, he communicates the danger of his adventures both as a spy alone and as one of Colonel Moffitt’s troops. He contrasts the ragged clothing and impromptu armament of the Whig volunteers with the professional equipage of the British soldiers, and reminds his readers that, between the two parties, Tories held sway in the Carolinas. Although he does not announce that the colonel had great faith in his abilities, the number of secret missions he was assigned and the colonel’s apparent satisfaction at

their completion suggest as much. Collins recounts his ability to gather information by knowing when to ask questions and when to stay quiet while others ask, and demonstrates his method in one encounter with a woman who spied for the Tories. While keeping silent, he heard all the news she knew, and managed to slip away to inform Colonel Moffitt of the Tories' position. Collins presents his activity as a spy as an unquestionable occupation, and one which he performs well. It requires neither equivocation nor flourishes.

In contrast, Roberts attempts to give Collins's tale more importance than it seeks. In his preface he evokes the names of Columbia, Washington, Christ, Messiah Ben David, the Star of Bethlehem, and St Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Roberts opens the narrative with this ponderous first line:

The Publisher offers the present work, not with a view through vanity of adding to the catalogue of historical information of the brave and patriotic sires of the revolution—not that he expects to receive a larger amount of applause than those who have already filled the minds of the country with a brilliant rehearsal of their illustrious deeds of heroism, and in fact, whose merits have not yet been half told, and which is fervently hoped will continue to be repeated in strains of enthusiasm, as long as a solitary vestige of republicanism is left to linger in the American heart. (iii)

In contrast, Collins begins more simply:

In reflecting on past events, and comparing them with the present, and having arrived at that period of life which unfits me for the more active employments and busy pursuits that have hitherto occupied my time, I thought it might not be amiss to amuse myself by writing a few incidents of my life, although they may not be interesting to anyone (who may chance to read these pages), yet might be, in some instances, amusing as well as important to some of my progeny when I am no more. (11)

Although the Roberts line is by no means his longest or most complicated, nor is the Collins line the shortest and simplest, the differences between the two styles are marked, as are their approaches to assessing the value Collins's autobiography. For Roberts, the future of republicanism and the American nation depend on our reading the narrative; for Collins, a little amusement might result. Roberts first establishes the necessity

of our reading the narrative to remind us of our beginnings: "Is the nation engulfed [*sic*] in a political mania, or is it mammon or ostensible wealth, false show, that causes us to turn a deaf ear to those memorable and early scenes?" (viii). After arousing his audience's patriotic guilt, he then seeks to present his subject in the best light by extolling Collins's integrity and humanity. Among his many virtues, we learn that Collins "was kind and generous to a fault—the chamber of the sick, the pillow of the dying, the vigils of the dead, never missed his sympathy and kind attention; administering on all occasions whatever services he could render" (ix). Collins himself makes little mention of "chambers of sick" or "pillows of the dying."

Despite the florid prose of the preface, Collins's narrative provides a good model of the autobiographical spy narrative and demonstrates why spies, rather than average soldiers, many of whom also wrote journals and memoirs, become the stuff of romantic fiction. Collins, unlike Harvey Birch (although similar to Crosby), served as both a spy and a soldier. Although Collins recounts his exploits while in both occupations, his adventures as a spy are more compelling for many reasons. For one, he is in as much control of the mission as anyone: he plans his route, his strategies for gaining information, and his exit. For another, he generally acts alone, or with one other person; thus the reader can immediately relate to the individual rather than the plural "we" which narrates the battle scenes. In addition, as one of many, and a low ranking one at that, Collins never has as clear a view of the battle as he does of the spying mission. In one battle, he remarks, "Here I had fired my little blue barrel twice, for I still carried her, but I suspect without effect as usual, for the second time I fired, it was at a man who tumbled out of a window at a short distance; I thought that I would stop his progress, but he scampered off without halting" (38). Collins's contribution to the cause of liberty as a spy seems easy to identify; as a soldier, he is one of many who may or may not have contributed to the killing which decided the battle.

Half of Collins's narrative takes place after the war has ended, yet the skills which served him as a spy came into play as a frontiersman. Like many other former soldiers, he joined a militia to protect the new American settlements in Georgia from Indian attack, for which he ran scouting missions. Prior to the war, his father's desire to see him learn a trade resulted in his learning shoemaking, barrel making, tailoring, farming and hunting, making him the proverbial "jack of all trades" and an utterly self-sufficient citizen, who

could responsibly begin a family once he had established himself financially. His travels during the war developed a wanderlust which continued throughout his life as he moved his family along with the southern frontier through Georgia, Louisiana, and finally resting in Texas where he died at the age of 81 in 1844, a few years before the Mexican War assured Texas's annexation to the United States.

Collins's narrative demonstrates less nationalistic self-awareness than Roberts's preface, yet it identifies how Collins would define a "good American" if asked. Like many of the American patriots serving in the South, Collins and his father joined a militia unit rather than the regular Continental soldiers, and thus stayed in his neighborhood for the most part. Militias, to his mind, exist to protect the homeland. He joins the militia in Georgia, where he moves after the war, in order to protect the settlement from Indians. Despite the emphasis on protecting home territory, he also appears to favor the continual advance of the American border, moving west every few years. A generic Protestant Christian, he "ma[kes] it a point to attend church every Sunday, and often on other days of the week" (91), yet tends to distrust clergy whom he has "always found to be illiberal, and have been more exposed to their contempt than their pity" (91). In general, he distrusts professional people, including clergy, lawyers (although he allows that they act as they do as a consequence of their profession), legislators, and "those connected in the great sanhedrim of our nation" (91). The only professionals who escape his scorn are doctors. His view of religion embraces a particularly democratic creed:

For my own part, I readily grant the right to preach up religion and morality, for doubtless morality is a concomitant of religion, but to bind down the consciences of men in points of faith and modes of worship, because it is your belief, or in case he refuses, consign him over to eternal damnation is too intolerant and unfits a man for being a *good parent, husband, citizen or patriot*. I think there is nothing more opposed to patriotism than intolerance in religious creeds. I would take this maxim: here is freedom to him that would read, here is freedom for him that would write, here is freedom for him that would think, and farther, the thinking faculty of man is uncontrollable, for it is absolutely not under his control, much less

that of another and of course must go free in spite of all efforts to control it. (93, emphasis added)

While Collins may not have recognized his sentiment regarding religion in the claims of the preface “that principles of freedom, of republicanism, of brotherly union, and national enfranchisement, are some of the forced and legitimate results issuing from the word of inspiration, and are intimately blended and inseparably interwoven with the Bible” (iii), Collins’s view of the necessity of both religious sentiment and religious freedom reflects a similar concern of other memoirists regarding morality as a necessity for virtuous service to America, as well as a distrust of arbitrary rules that do not result from reasoned consideration, whether they be legal or spiritual. He also links the good and moral patriot to the family man. The emphasis on the family, especially the patriot as father, echoes Jay Fliegelman’s conclusion about American familial relationships after the throwing off of the political patriarchy of England in the Revolution: “As the dream of a postmillennial universal family must be surrendered to achieve the safer, more practical goal of perfecting the nuclear family relationship, so piety must give way to moralism in religion and universalism to nationalism in politics” (264). But in addition to being the nuclear family man, Collins and others writing their memoirs also become identified as fathers of the nation; a motif Roberts echoes in the preface as he refers to Collins as “father” repeatedly, not in the sense of a direct familial connection, but as one of America’s sons referring to one of her fathers. Although by time Roberts was writing, in 1859, twenty-three years after Collins had put down his pen, “forefathers” had begun to mean the fairly limited number of men in positions of great authority who became the stuff of legends, Roberts’s preface reminds his reader that the common soldier too deserves the appellation of “forefather” and that he not only fought to protect the immediate concerns of home, but also he had a very distinct definition of liberty and how that liberty should be protected in all facets of life. Although comparatively rare by this period, the tales of the citizen soldier, and his conception of liberty deserve a place with biographies of Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin.

Like others, Collins defined “liberty” and “tolerance” in terms of the individual rather than in groups, and tacitly limited “tolerance” to white Protestants. In Collins’s categorization of the multiple religions practiced in his neighborhood—Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists—he names only Protestant

denominations. His participation in the Indian wars suggests an intolerance to Indian claims on the land, in direct contrast to the disinterested governance of Indian affairs as portrayed by John Connolly. He commonly depicts the Indians as on the attack (for no apparent reason, other than their being Indians) and particularly hostile, yet he calmly relates the militia's burning of an Indian town as a humorous incident in that one of his comrades, attacking an old squaw, was discovered in a close hug with her (86). Collins displays little overt consciousness of America as a former colonial possession; the Revolution in his narrative is entirely a civil war fought between Tories and Whigs, the British appearing by name (other than generically as "the enemy") only during the Battle of Cowpens (55). Collins does not identify himself in terms of Great Britain at all. He sees oppositions between professionals and laborers, and whites and Indians, not British and American. He does, of course, define himself in the terms of the promise of the new nation: independence, liberty, and self-reliance.

Collins positions himself on the positive side of the settlers' postcolonial experience: not as the subjugated pawn of British imperialism, but as the righteous settler of new lands and tamer of aboriginal peoples. Not only do the Indians attack the white settlers unjustly, but the federal government also conspires against the whites by giving the Indians better grain, so the militia soldiers complain, than that given to the white soldiers drafted to guard them shortly after the 1788 treaty between the government and the Creek (74-75). Although Collins rarely comments on the government of the United States, he clearly does not see the new government as an ally in his actions as a frontier man, and he remains suspicious of any Indian policy that does not result in keeping the Indians away from the settlers as they move west. Collins determines that any attempts at assimilation would be fruitless after an experiment performed by some of the men of the fort: "a few small Indian boys were taken prisoners by some of our men who thought they could make slaves of them, but in this they found themselves mistaken; for after a trial of four or five years, they could make nothing of them but Indians, and sent them back to the nation" (85-6). Collins's opinions regarding the position of Native Americans in relation to "America" is not the most strident of the time, but it does reflect an emergent imperialism from the very people who had not long before fought for independence from an empire, and the smooth transition the nation made by identifying threats to its desired sovereignty similarly.

Both the Revolution and the Indian battles were justified on the similar grounds of protecting home and personal liberty; that one war established the nation's origin by breaking from a colonizing government, while the others sought to extend the nation's territory by acting as a colonizing government registered little difference in the nation's perception. Both allowed the people to settle the land as they wanted. Collins, writing during the Jackson administration, reflects the populist bent of the nation, particularly on the frontier.

Israel Potter's Narrative of Exile

While most of the overt struggle for the new country occurred on the North American continent, and most people tried to answer Crevecoeur's question, "What is an American?" in terms of the American landscape and local culture, there were also American agents spying in England, and those who tried to answer the question of national character in contradistinction to England. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffen note, "an important site of conflict in postcolonial literature is generated, as the backward-looking impotence of the exile and the forward-looking impetus to indigeneity collide" (136). Most of the memoirists, writing after the war, and seeing the successful creation of an American nation, reflect on the forward looking impetus. James Moody, as would-be loyal colonist and unwilling exile, provides some of the "backward-looking impotence of the exile" to demonstrate the conflict of the American identity immediately after the war. Israel Potter manages to be a "forward-looking" exile whose tale attempts to establish his Americanness by demonstrating how much he dislikes England.

While his American compatriots wrote of their struggles and plans for liberty, Israel Potter experienced little liberty as a result of his exertions during the war, and returned to America a broken and disillusioned man. Potter's narrative, *The Life and Remarkable Adventures of Israel R. Potter*, as dictated to Henry Trumbull in 1824, his publisher and ghostwriter, is a particularly pathetic tale that begins not too dissimilarly from other tales of young men making their way on their own. Thwarted in his attempts to marry his next-door neighbor, Israel left his home in Cranston, Rhode Island, to make his fortune in the New England frontier. His early attempts at private business ended badly: only after he threatens to take legal action (armed with a deposition from a witness) did he receive his pay from a man who promised Potter four

dollars for rowing up the Connecticut River; and another man swindled Potter out of the 200 acres of land he had promised for Potter's work in clearing it. Rather than continue to suffer the consequences of working for unscrupulous men on barter, he hired with a surveying company, and armed with those wages, bought land outright, using it for some farming and fur trapping. He sold the land and tried fur trading with the Indians, which proved a profitable venture. Flush with over 200 dollars cash, he returned to Rhode Island. Once there, he failed again in his suit to marry his neighbor, so he left, this time as a sailor. After several sailing jobs, he returned to Rhode Island, where he joined the militia formed in reaction to the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

His military career was apparently brief, but highly notable. He and the Rhode Island militia joined the other American troops at Bunker Hill where he and his fellows were "harangued by 'old General Put' as he was termed" (15) and he had a chance to demonstrate his hunting skills which, he claims, had the redcoats been deer, "[he was] confident that on another occasion would have produced [him] a deer skin" (15). After meritorious action and an honorable wounding, he recovered sufficiently to join the newly formed navy as a member of the crew of the *Washington*, a ten gun brigantine which had the misfortune to be captured three days after setting sail. Taken prisoner, he and the rest of the crew sailed for England against their will. He led an attempted mutiny, but an English deserter betrayed him. Upon arriving in England, half the prisoners, including Potter, became ill with small pox. After a stay in the hospital, he and the survivors were transferred to a guard ship. After about a month on the ship, he was tasked to assist the bargemen in rowing one of the officers ashore. As the boat's crew entered a pub for refreshment, he made a break for freedom. When he had run ten miles away, a naval officer presumed Potter was a deserter and arrested him. Potter confessed and returned to the inn in the custody of two soldiers. That night, when the two were drunk, Potter escaped and became a fugitive at large in England.

In England, he had "remarkable adventures" indeed: he was befriended by a kindly knight who recognized him as an American, yet refused to turn him into the authorities; he met King George III who also recognized him as an American; he was befriended by activists working for the American cause, including a Squire Woodcock, John Horne Tooke (the foremost English radical of his time) and a James Bridges, who

employed him as a secret courier to Benjamin Franklin with whom he met and received “most agreeable” instruction and encouragement (50); and he gave comfort to American prisoners, including Henry Laurens, the former president of the Continental Congress. Despairing of ever returning home while the war still waged, he married and began a family, supporting them as a carriage driver, brick maker, and later, as a chair mender. Once the war ended, Potter did not have enough money for passage back to America for his rapidly growing family, so he stayed in England. Adding to his troubles, the job and beggar market were flooded with former soldiers who drove wages to below subsistence levels. Potter, with more and more mouths to feed, became poorer and poorer and many of his ten children died within their first year. His prospects picked up slightly during the next war between England and France, but when peace came in 1814, the situation returned to dismal until ultimately his family dwindled to himself and his youngest son, a boy of seven and his income consisted entirely of the charity he could collect on London’s beggar-laden streets. Finally, after being refused assistance from the government because he was a native American, he applied to the American consulate for assistance. The consul arranged passage for his son, who did not qualify for American assistance, and, after Israel recovered from his poverty with adequate food and shelter compliments of the consul, he too sailed to America. Upon arriving in 1823, he discovered that his family had moved west many years before. He applied to the United States government for a military pension, but was denied because he did not file by the deadline. Because of this denial, he told his tale to notify others of his plight and to decry the “strange and unprecedented circumstance, of withholding from [him] that reward which they [the government] have so generally bestowed on others” (106). It is a heart-wrenching conclusion to a tale of misery.

Unlike later narratives ghostwritten by younger, more educated men, Potter’s does not demonstrate a great distinction between its humble author and elevated language, but this may be due to the fact that part of the appeal of the narrative is in the humble circumstances of the memoirist. If anything, Trumbull may have added to the humility by expanding the poverty scenes in London to include hearsay stories of people reduced to eating grass or the family pet, enhancing the misery of the tale and its appeal as a piece of

sentimental reform literature depicting the circumstances which led to crime and other depravity, a form which David S. Reynolds argues enjoyed popularity in the 1820s (176).

David Chacko and Alexander Kulcsar conclude that the bulk of any fabrication in the tale was most likely created by Potter himself. In their article, "Israel Potter: Genesis of a Legend," they note many historical discrepancies in Potter's narrative, including: the Rhode Island militia arrived too late to fight at Bunker Hill; the *Washington's* maiden voyage ended in mutiny by the entire crew (an incident not mentioned in Potter's narrative), thus it was the second voyage which ended in capture; there is no record of attempted mutiny on the British ship; many Americans in similar circumstances managed to get home during the war, so passage back to America should not have taken Israel over forty years had he been trying to get home. They argue, based on other historical information, that he probably served as a spy for the British rather than for the American cause. While his claims of meeting King George III, Squire Woodcock, and John Horne may be pure fantasy, he did indeed meet with Benjamin Franklin to whom he handed a badly misspelled letter of introduction which probably did not come from the gentlemen he claimed for it. He also may have been the mysterious Mr. Bradfille who appeared with the requisite paperwork to visit the heavily guarded Laurens, and then proceeded to pump him for information, under the guise of friendly chitchat, and offered to act as a courier for him to France. According to their argument, Potter's claims of acting as a spy have more truth as a British spy than as an American one.

The narrative may be as fictional as John Howe's. Taken together, the two reveal a great deal about the assumptions about what makes an ideal American heroic spy. Because both narratives freely mix fiction with truth, they have more latitude in recounting events of their alleged lives than the others. As with many of the other narratives, both are frontiersmen as well as spies and reflect an agrarian perspective of America. Potter's vision of agrarian America, seen most in contrast to the urban squalor of London, not only depicts America as a new world, in contrast to the old, but also suggests that the citizens of the United States will never suffer the debilitating poverty of Londoners since there is always land to farm which will feed its people. Certainly his reminiscences of America and "the many blessings there enjoyed by the even the poorest class of people—of their fair fields producing a regular supply of bread—of their convenient houses,

to which they could repair after the toils of the day, to partake of the fruits of their labour, safe from the storms and the cold, and where they could lay down their heads to rest without any to molest them or make them afraid" (94) reflect the naïve nostalgia of a man who left his country a long time before and has forgotten the bitter cold of New England winters, and the other seasons' notoriously changeable weather which could wreak havoc on crops. But it also suggests a belief that given land for farming, all, even the "poorest class of people," should be able to feed and house themselves without relying upon charity or government handouts, a belief which informed the government's sometimes contradictory policies on land grants and cheap land sales of frontier land. The Land Relief Act of 1821, for instance, was motivated as much by a desire to refinance the growing land debt as by a desire to allow more people to buy land on extended credit and stimulate western migration (Feller 35-8). Land policies for decades after seemed guided by the understanding that with 160 acres of land, no matter where, any hardworking American should be able to support him or herself and family. The frontiersman was thence the hero of the new American landscape as he enhanced the land and protected the ever growing homeland. The debates in Congress were not over the legitimacy of providing for the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal settler "whose poverty match his virtue"; they were over whether that ideal settler would prevail, or would be swindled by the shifty land speculators who preyed upon the likes of the ideal settler (Feller 29). Although the land speculator was one part of the reality, the ideal settler lived on in the popular imagination. Because of the vast amount of land available, the government could provide land bounties for very little while seeming very generous. During the Revolution, faced with falling morale and growing resentment, the government offered lands as a recruitment incentive (Friedenberg 184). Even much later in 1855, the government was very generous with land grants, offering land to anyone who had served in any official battle for the United States (*Instructions* 1-2). It was assumed that those who could work would acquire land. Landowners enjoyed many privileges in the early republic, often having much greater say in governmental affairs; as late as 1825, Rhode Island, Virginia and Louisiana had property restrictions on suffrage (Wood 294).

But Israel returns penniless and landless and unlikely to benefit from governmental land grants which required a down payment. Like Howe's narrative, Potter's narrative decries governmental

impediments to his living a comfortable life. While Howe's account recalls the battles over tariffs and restrictions on importation, which led to an active smuggling community in Vermont and New Hampshire, Potter's recounts his disappointment at the rejection of his pension bid based on the technicality that he was not in the country when the pension law was passed. While it is true that public denouncement of fraud drove Congress to demand greater burdens of proof of service and indigence, refusal on the ground of not being in the country when the bill was passed seems hard to believe since every year brought revisions to the pension laws for Revolutionary veterans, including the 1855 "Act in Addition to Certain Acts Granting Bounty Lands to Certain Officers and Soldiers" (*Instructions* 1), even though a drummer boy who had joined the war in the last days in 1783 at the age of fifteen would have been eighty-seven when the law was passed. Given Chacko and Kulscar's research, it is more likely that he had been refused because of his inability to prove that he had been in government service for the nine months required for the 1820 act or that he had not in fact deserted during his forty-eight years in England. Rather than attack the government's intrusiveness, he rails against the insensitivity of the government bureaucracy. In their individual ways, both Potter and Howe protest against a centralized government that attempts to exert its influence beyond the boundaries set by the Constitution. While debates about the wisdom of centralized government have been waged since the debates of the federalists and anti-federalists, Andrew Jackson's political rise during the 1820s was fueled in part by his attacks during his presidential campaign on centralized government as embodied the Bank of the United States.

Regardless of its truth, Potter's narrative is fulsomely pro-American even as it deplores the insensitivity of the government. Before he begins his rant against the government's stinginess, he tells his readers, "I love too well the country which gave me birth, and entertain too high a respect for those employed in its government, to reproach them with ingratitude" (106). While this form of "with all due respect" cannot hide Potter's attitude toward the government, the leaders of the Revolution he mentions are all exemplary men and generous in their conduct towards him: Franklin converses with him for over an hour and agrees to assist him to return to America; Henry Laurens promises, when in a situation more favorable than imprisoned in the Tower of London, to assist Potter's return to America, "consider[ing] it a duty which he owed his

country” (61). That nothing comes of these promises does not apparently bother Potter who seems to forget them as soon as they are uttered. That they made such promises demonstrates the Americans’ superiority as people. Even John Paul Jones, mentioned in passing (Potter does not claim to meet him) embodies “the bravery and unconquerable resolutions of the Yankees” (59). Potter himself presents himself as the proud Yankee who does not trumpet his nationality only for fear of losing his liberty and his opportunity to return home. Yet even when he marries an Englishwoman, he marries an honorary American who takes similar pride after the battle of Yorktown in “the military fame of [his] countrymen” (59). Although he does not return for forty-eight years after his capture, Potter continuously reminds his readers that he never stopped “ardent[ly]” wishing for home (96). Potter takes care to portray himself as the ideal American: frontiersman, patriotic soldier, intrepid undercover agent, democratic citizen of the world who can cavort with kings and paupers, and ingenious survivor with an undying love of his American homeland. As the ideal American shape-shifter, he practices deception for a worthy cause, and seems quite proud of his skill. He boasts, even as he apologizes: “the reader will now perceive that I had now become almost an adept at deception, which I would not however so frequently practiced had not self-preservation demanded it” (30). Like the other successful spies, he skillfully practices the arts of deception, but employs these means as the only way of accomplishing his worthy end—preserving his life in order to conduct missions for America, and one day return home.

Israel Potter : the Novel

Potter’s narrative caught Herman Melville’s attention in 1843 when he acquired “a tattered copy, rescued by the merest chance from the rag-pickers” as he notes in his introduction to the novel he later wrote from the narrative (vi). His description of the tattered book seems calculated to suggest parallels between the “narrative of [Potter’s] adventures, forlornly published, on sleazy gray paper, [which] appeared among the peddlars” (v) with Israel himself and his only legacy—his patriotic tale. As the reviewer at *Putnam’s Monthly* notes, “the original ... is not so rare as Mr. Melville seems to think” (462),⁶¹ but by 1854, when Melville finally wrote the novel for serialization in *Putnam’s Monthly* (the book was published in 1855), the

modest number of revolutionary narratives and biographies published in the first part of the century had mostly disappeared from view. Those of famous historical characters like Benjamin Franklin, John Paul Jones, and Ethan Allen were readily available, but the humble narratives of common soldiers like Israel Potter were largely unknown. Although *Putnam's* reviewer smugly suggests that all educated readers would have ready access to Potter's narrative, his fellow literary critics, as collected in Higgins's and Parker's anthology of the contemporary reviews, know little more of the historical Israel Potter than what Melville writes. Yet few seem concerned. By and large, the contemporary reviewers enjoyed the book, and praised its "manly and direct" style, "in pleasant contrast to that of [Melville's] last book" (New York *Morning Courier* 458), *Pierre* (1852). It may be these favorable reviews that, in the perverse nature of literary study, have condemned this book to be Melville's "most underrated novel" (Browne 68). It occupies far fewer critical pages than any of Melville's other books, and fewer than many of his shorter works including "Billy Budd," "Benito Cereno" and "Bartleby, the Scrivener." Many books purportedly on Melville's works do not mention it at all.

At the time of its publication as a novel, it was a critical success and moderate commercial success. Reynolds implies it also enjoyed a popularity among the yellow-covered novel set as a fast paced sensationalist tale, especially after T. B. Peterson republished it under the title *The Refugee* (299), but Peterson published only one such unauthorized edition in 1865. There were three authorized editions in 1855, but no others until 1924. Its publication in the magazine suggests its accessibility, although possibly not in the lower economic class whom Melville saw as most affected by the "American experiment." Potter's tale exemplifies governmental callousness to the basic needs of common citizens and the hypocrisy of celebrating humble beginnings while continuing to codify the social distinctions so many claimed that the Revolution would render obsolete. As Michael Kammen documents, the 1820s witnessed competing claims for the "Spirit of '76" between the working classes who urged "rewriting the Declaration of Independence to restore the rights employers 'have robbed us of'" and conservatives who were faintly embarrassed by the nation's revolutionary past and sought to present the revolution as "not that revolutionary," and distinct from the social upheaval of the French Revolution or the Latin American revolutions (45). By the 1850s, the

conservative historians were winning and the accounts of the revolution by the working class population were disappearing (Kammen 51).

Melville's retelling of Potter's story stands as one of the first "ironic" spy novels in American literature, which Jon Thompson describes as depicting "the grim and morally bankrupt business of bureaucratic infighting and pseudorevolutionary wrangling, both of which promote only individual interests" (95). Melville's novel plays on the pessimism that lurks just under the surface of Potter's narrative and many other soldiers' and spies' narratives. As a genre, spy memoirs can support interpretations as the American dream gone bad, especially those written for purposes of requesting a pension. Since pensions for common soldiers and irregular officers depended on the soldier's indigence or incapacitation, the memoirs often recount pathetic tales of men who risked life and limb to perform dangerous missions, suffered cruelty in prisons, or were badly wounded in the service of their country and now face starvation twenty, thirty, or forty years later. Contrasted with the biographies and memoirs of the founding fathers, who came or pretended to come from similar humble beginnings, yet ultimately became powerful and wealthy leaders of the new country, the soldiers' memoirs reveal an apparent inequity in the land of the free. The contrast between editors' language and that of the memoirists also suggests a national embarrassment at illiteracy, rural education, or even plain speech. Barnum's assertion that Crosby's language was not elevated enough for history seems at odds with his implication that his actions were worthy of historical record. The contrast thirty-one years after the first edition of *The Spy Unmasked* between the plain speech of Collins and his editor's Latinate prose is even more marked.

Collins's narrative was one of the few published for the first time in the 1850s. Most spy narratives were timed with the pension offerings and, perhaps not coincidentally, Cooper's novel *The Spy* and its imitators. Although spy novels remained in print through the antebellum period and, as Christine Bold argues, helped fuel the cheap paperback market for adventure stories during the 1840s and 1850s (17-19), most of the pension narratives had disappeared by that time. As the editor at *Putnam's Magazine* implies in his announcement that he has a copy of Potter's original narrative, they could be had but, as the ignorance of other reviewers reveals, they were not often read in the 1850s. It matters little whether Melville really

believed that Potter's narrative was as rare as he claimed or merely enhanced the book's forlorn appearance to make a point, because his description of the book's and its narrator's neglect was accurate. It also matters little that Melville played with the "facts" of the narrative since the historical Israel is less important than the memorial Israel Melville creates. By writing the novel, Melville not only recalls the neglected "true" stories of America's neglected heroes, reminding us as "we revel in broadcloth, let us not forget what we owe to linsey-woolsey" (14), he also draws upon the historical novels by writers like Cooper which, by presenting history in popular form with a racy adventure tale, reaped their authors substantial profits, profits which Melville, bloody from the critical and financial pounding he had received for *Moby Dick* and *Pierre*, had hoped to realize as well.

The novel more or less follows Israel Potter's narrative: more in chapters two through six which cover Israel's life in America and his adventures in England up to meeting Squire Woodcock and less in the later parts of the novel where Melville allows his imagination nearly free play. From Potter's self-conscious name dropping, Melville expands his meeting with King George III, and extends the meeting with Franklin into a wickedly funny dissection of the distinguished sage, who manages to rob Israel of the pleasures of Paris while lecturing him on the foolishness of luxuries, and an introduction to John Paul Jones, whom the historical Potter did not meet. After Israel returns to England and Squire Woodcock, he is hidden in a secret chamber for three days, until he exits it to find that the squire has died. He escapes the house by impersonating the squire's ghost, and the area by impersonating (less successfully) a scarecrow, only to be impressed on a British ship. After single-handedly overwhelming the officers, he escapes on to John Paul Jones's ship the *Ranger*. Having totally abandoned Potter's narrative, Melville drew from Cooper's *History of the Navy of the United States* (1839), Robert Sands's *The Life and Correspondence of John Paul Jones* (1830) which includes not only Jones's many letters, but also his narratives of events, and Nathaniel Fanning's memoir of his life as a member of Jones's crew (1808). From these varied sources, he creates wild adventures with Paul Jones, including Israel in the crew of the *Ranger* during Jones's famous mission to kidnap the Earl of Selkirk and on the crew of the *Bonhomme Richard* during the battle with the *Serapis* and Jones's famous proclamation that he had not yet begun to fight (a subtle echo of Potter's recitation of

General Putnam's by now clichéd order at Bunker's Hill to hold fire). Although Potter only briefly mentioned Jones as another American patriot closer to England's shores than America's, Melville makes him a major character, featuring Jones in over a third of the book. Israel leaves Jones by accident as he boards a British ship, thinking that his shipmates follow behind him. Instead, the ship makes its escape, and Israel is stranded. Impersonating a British sailor named Peter Perkins (with obvious echoes of Peter's denial of his identity as a disciple of Jesus), Israel attempts to wedge himself into one of the ship's societies. Melville also adds a scene with Ethan Allen (drawn largely from Allen's narrative), whom Potter does not mention at all. After leaving Allen, the narrative again follows the lines of Potter's narrative, although greatly compressing the years of poverty in England to four chapters until Israel, accompanied by his only surviving son, returns to America on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration.

In irreverently comic scenes, Melville presents men who had already become American historical legends by 1854 outside an American setting to heighten their Americanness. If we take Franklin, Jones, Allen, and Israel as exemplary Americans (indeed, they are the only Americans in the novel), the common denominator among the four would be the incongruity between outer appearance and inner being. Bill Christophersen suggests that the American character as depicted in the novel rests in paradox (25). Allen and Jones simultaneously personify the two ends of the spectrum between savage and civilized. Jones, dressed like a dandy, yet tattooed like a Pacific Islander, is both a fierce warrior and a lady's man who charms the duchess of Selkirk as easily as a French chambermaid. Allen, dressed in his Canadian clothes, resembles the English idea of the uncouth American frontiersman yet speaks like a "beau in a parlor" to the ladies (194). Franklin, the self-consciously rustic American sage who dresses in a coonskin cap in the French court, dresses in the fanciful robe of a conjurer when alone (49).

Israel also engages in certain deceptions, but with considerably less art than his more flamboyant countrymen. From the time he escapes the soldiers in England, his life becomes a continuous masquerade, masquerading as, among other things: a British sailor, a cripple, a ghost, and a scarecrow. He also engages in deception for different motives. While his more prominent compatriots appear to consciously play upon European assumptions that Americans are savage and simple by encouraging the perception until they can

believe it with overtly courtly behavior, be it the language of the parlor, the chivalry of allowing a lady to preserve her family silver, or the cagey chess game of diplomacy with a military ally. Allen, Jones, and Franklin consciously manipulate their public image and historical legacy. Israel, in contrast, engages in disguise and deception in order to survive; however, he does so with considerably less skill. Although he has no trouble while employed at Sir John Millet's, rumors that he is an American follow him, which was not the case for the historical Israel. Melville's Israel, however, seems plagued by the physical typology of the historical romance in which his Americanness shows through any disguise, at least to the properly sympathetic people, including the good-hearted Sir John Millet, Squire Woodcock, Benjamin Franklin who smells "Indian corn" as he walks in (51), and, paradoxically, the kindly King George III. Although, for the most part, his disguises serve well enough for purposes of making a quick escape, unlike Harvey Birch, he cannot successfully employ the most outrageous. One of the more comic moments in the novel is his attempt to portray a scarecrow, yet it is also his least successful disguise.

Cooper's books spring to mind as one reads *Israel Potter, His Fifty Years in Exile*, particularly *The Spy* and *The Pilot*, Cooper's novelistic ode to John Paul Jones as a mysterious, brooding, yet brilliant pilot of an American ship off the coast of England. Although the character of Jones in *The Pilot* little resembles the wild, dashing, and arrogant Jones in *Israel Potter*, one suspects that Melville intended to turn Cooper's reverent portrayal, the most prominent fictional portrait of Jones, on its head. But in addition to Cooper's novels, and their immediate imitators by Sedgwick, Simms, and Robinson, the cheaply published heroic spy novels of the 1840s and 1850s also provide a backdrop for understanding the subversion of Melville's irreverent depiction of the Revolutionary conflict and its heroes. Even more than Cooper's books, these predecessors to dime novels present the conflict and the heroes in black and white terms: the good spies are family-oriented, naturally noble, and they always get the girl. Harvey Birch, the exiled liminal figure of the war, in comparison, is a pathetic sufferer in the battle for liberty.

In many ways, Israel is the cynical extension of Harvey. A would-be family man thwarted in his attempts to grow roots in his native soil and raise a family, Israel does not choose his exile as Harvey does in order to perform his difficult patriotic duty for his country and his commander-in-chief. While Harvey may

appear to be a man without a cause, Israel is truly a man without a country. Rather than willingly sacrificing his all for the country, Israel joins because it is his duty, but unlike Cincinnatus and Israel Putnam, Israel Potter's first duty is to finish plowing the field before he leaves to join the fighting (14). Unlike Harvey, who understands his duty, willingly seeks it, and has a protecting mentor in Harper/Washington, Israel falls into circumstances, becomes useful to some people, and is discarded. He lacks Harvey's self possession, and he lacks Harvey's support system. As John McWilliams notes, both men provide important services, yet they "can have no recognized status in the world they are helping to create" (*Hawthorne, Melville* 186). Still, even here they differ. Harvey, dying gloriously on the battlefield, is recognized through the physical typology of the heroic spy by the sons of the men and women of the ruling class he most admired. Israel, on the other hand, dies utterly unknown in his native land, and unrecognized by the impersonal channels of government for the sacrifices he made to his country. Harvey, an uncanny mimic, skillfully practices the arts of deception which mark the spy of the historical romance: he can utterly hide his appearance and his personality in a disguise, but he also can throw the guise off completely. The lies that accompany the deception have no moral impact: like Crosby's seeming spying, the act of lying does not become lying if the motives are pure. Israel, lying about his identity so often, begins to lose contact with the self beneath the disguises until the question "Who are you?" hounds him throughout by "the Shuttle" chapter. Israel, trusting and essentially guileless, cannot maintain the cynicism required for continuous deception.

One reason for his failure is his inability to persuade others to do his bidding. In contrast, Franklin, Jones, and Allen are all tremendously persuasive and charismatic and very aware of their image which, through memoirs, they consciously shape. In addition to novels, Melville comments upon the personal memoirs and biographies of famous patriots, which serve as sources not only for Jones, but also for Ethan Allen and for Benjamin Franklin, whose voluminous writings present a literary shape-shifter, like the shape-shifters Melville would explore in his next book, *The Confidence Man*. By using the personal memoirs of famous Americans to expand the personal memoir of a forgotten American, Melville delineates the differences between the common American and the stuff of legend, and how each contributes to America's self-description of national character. Melville's first of three visions of the American national character,

Franklin, demonstrates Franklin's conscious manipulation of his image as detached from his actions. Reciting Poor Richard's maxims while he removes the pleasure of cologne, sugar, brandy, and perfumed soap, not to mention the pretty chambermaid (66-8), from Israel's room, Franklin resembles Melville's later confidence man, Egbert, the disciple of Mark Winsome, who refuses to lend money on the pretense of preserving friendship (*Confidence Man* 286). Israel falls prey to Franklin's "condescending affability" (67) until Franklin and his aura have left the room. The irony of Franklin's loan of a guidebook to Paris while not allowing Israel to see the sights is not lost on Israel, once out of the radius of Franklin's charisma. Franklin is "the type and genius of his land" (62).

Having carefully weighed the world, Franklin could act any part in it. By nature turned to knowledge, his mind was often grave, but never serious. At times he had seriousness—extreme seriousness—for others, but never for himself. Tranquility was to him instead of it. This philosophical levity of tranquillity, so to speak, is shown in his easy variety of pursuits. Printer, post-master, almanac maker, essayist, chemist, orator, tinker, statesman, humorist, philosopher, parlour man, political economist, professor of housewifery, ambassador, projector, maxim-monger, herb-doctor, wit: Jack of all trades, master of each and mastered by none....Franklin was everything but a poet. (61-2)

Melville's intentions in creating Franklin have excited some debate. While most critics have seen the portrait as a particularly cutting one, denouncing Franklin's duplicity as self-interested and his emphasis on materialism rather than altruism (See Kammen 224; Adler 81), some, like William Dillingham and McWilliams, see Melville's portrait of Franklin as the benign portrayal of a true sage protecting Israel for his own good (Dillingham 260-2; McWilliams *Hawthorne, Melville* 187). As with so much of Melville, the truth lies somewhere in between. It seems hard to escape the conclusion that Franklin is a scamp and a confidence man on a grand scale, yet as in his treatment of his assorted confidence men aboard the *Fidele*, Melville seems oddly fond of the rascally Franklin. Franklin is the ultimate diplomat who calmly maneuvers the ferocious Paul Jones "much as a lion tamer might soothingly manipulate the aggravated king of beasts" (73). He himself seems a little bemused at how successfully he has influenced Jones:

“Thank you for your frankness,” said Paul; “frank myself, I love to deal with a frank man. You, Doctor Franklin, are true and deep, and so you are frank.

The sage sedately smiled, a queer incredulity just lurking in the corner of his mouth.

(76)

Although Israel recognizes Franklin as “sly, sly, sly” (70), he cannot escape the power of his charisma, and has no art to effect similar persuasion himself. Indeed, Israel often finds that no one will believe him when he tells the truth, as when, dressed as scarecrow, he cannot buy a decent suit with the money he has.

Paul Jones, the second of Melville’s national types, may be a dupe to Franklin’s sorcery, but he exerts a powerful force over others himself. When Israel encounters the American captain again, after single-handedly eliminating the English officers who had impressed him, one of Jones’s crewmen credits Israel’s superhuman effort in capturing the ship to Jones’s charisma, noting, “Captain Paul is the devil for putting men up to be tigers” (118). Indeed, Israel forgets his desire to return to America as he willingly agrees to serve with Jones. Although Jones personifies a very different type from Franklin, a dandified savage as opposed to a sly, cosmopolitan man pretending to be a simple rustic, he too represents America, which, Melville notes, “is, or may yet be, the Paul Jones of nations” (158). Like Franklin, he is charming, convincing both the Countess of Selkirk, and her husband, the earl, that “Paul was a man of honour,” an pronouncement with which, Melville sardonically comments, “[i]t were rash to differ in opinion” (147). Paul Jones is also a cunning warrior, sneaking up on several boats without revealing his colors and capturing an officer from the *Drake* who had boarded the *Ranger* in a gesture of goodwill (147). Despite his charm, he acts as also a solitary warrior, “a prowling *brave*” (original emphasis, 126), in the tradition of rugged American individuals, often portrayed as spiritual descendents of the noble savage, a popular American icon during the first half of the century. Although a native Scotsman, Paul Jones clearly serves as the white “noble savage” of the book, attempting to put on the trappings of civilization to cover his tattoo markings, yet always looking somewhat comical in the excesses of his dandy clothes, similar to portraits of Native Americans wearing European dress articles along with their native dress. As a representative of American foreign policy, Jones is decidedly inconsistent. On the one hand, he demonstrates a capability for ferocity

and piracy, sinking a barley boat and capturing a fishing boat, two non-combatants, as well as carrying out what could only be considered a terrorist mission of setting fire to the coal port Whitehaven to demonstrate that the Americans could wreak havoc on British soil. On the other hand, the arson attack intentionally injured no one, and he acts like a star-struck parody of a chivalric officer with the Countess of Selkirk, signing his “super-ardent note,” “your ladyship’s adoring enemy” (146). Given these inconsistencies, we can only conclude, as Melville does, that Paul Jones is magnanimously “chivalrous, however unprincipled a foe” (139).

American foreign policy on the North American continent shortly before Melville wrote *Israel Potter* bears up to such an oxymoron. The Mexican-American war (1846-1848) was publicly fought to protect the newly annexed Texas from Mexico, thus defining as self-defense a war the United States provoked with Mexico in order to acquire more land. In the end, the war resulted in the annexation of half of what had been Mexico to the United States. The Indian wars, waged to protect the settlers’ homes built on Indian lands, were in effect the forcible acquisition of land and displacement of nations. Indian policy at the time was domestic imperialism. While bowing and scraping in the European courts for acceptance, the United States were well on their way to eliminating significant European influence from the Western hemisphere. The Monroe doctrine, issued some thirty years before in 1823, had identified to Europe the United States’ contention that the Western hemisphere was their sphere of influence. As Howard Zinn notes, the 1850s were an active period in enforcing the doctrine: marines landed in Argentina during a revolution in 1852; in Nicaragua in 1853, “to protect American lives and interests during political disturbances”; 1853-54 marked the “opening of Japan” and Commodore Perry’s expedition; 1854, American forces destroyed Greytown, Nicaragua, “to avenge an insult to the American Minister”; and in 1855, “U.S. and European naval forces landed to protect American interests during an attempted revolution in Montevideo,” Uruguay (291). Earlier in the century, Americans sought to exercise their influence even in the Eastern Hemisphere as the American Colonizing Society, founded in 1816, established colonies in Sierra Leone and Liberia as a way of “repatriating” free African Americans.

American expansionist policies, at home and abroad, shift American concerns from those of the settler cut loose from the colonial government, to those of a colonizing government itself; Melville's novel demonstrates the shift, especially if compared to *The Spy*. First, Melville changes the focus from Great Britain as the unwanted, corrupt colonizing government to the emergent American government, and places the new nation within the international community, rather than dwelling on its development in isolation. By enhancing Israel's role as an American agent working abroad through his extended discussions with Franklin and his lengthy, albeit fictitious, tour of duty with Paul Jones, Melville shifts the emphasis from the sins of Great Britain, documented in *The Life and Adventures of Israel Potter*, to the shabby treatment Israel receives at the hands of Americans. Although Cooper also depicts Americans, specifically the Skinners, as the primary threat to the new nation and its government, Melville depicts the very people who hold the power of the new government as the greatest threat to the national interest. Although F.O. Matthiessen and other critics fault Melville for virtually ignoring the bulk of Potter's narrative, the years of abject poverty in the streets of London, concluding that his compassionate sympathy to the plight of the poor makes retelling their tale too painful (Matthiessen 491-2; Dillingham 293), they ignore Melville's interest in the American aspects of the story. After all, as a serial Melville had subtitled the novel "A Fourth of July Tale," and he means to explore the "national character" that distinguishes the American from his European counterparts. Israel is an American for whom the American nation exists only as an "imagined community," to use Benedict Anderson's phrase, all the more so since he left before the Declaration of Independence declared the existence of America as a political entity, and long before the Constitution defined the political government. His exile demonstrates his distance from the political reality of America; his life of poverty in England does not. By remaining in exile, Israel cannot experience American democracy, nor did he before he left: he is run out of his home by patriarchal tyranny; he lives an isolated existence in the woods; he returns to join the army, one of the least "democratic" of institutions. Yet his ideal of a world of equality, because he has never seen it in action, remains unsullied. He is our plebian representative of a country that pretends no social distinctions, yet in fact guards them as jealously as does English society. As our everyman foil, Israel

focuses our attention on the international implications of the Revolution, and to probe the commonality of the models of America presented by the illustrative heroic legends who grace European soil.

As unintentional diplomat and intelligence courier, Israel is compared to the quintessentially diplomatic Franklin, and found lacking in guile. As sailor and warrior, Israel is measured against Jones, and proves to be an apt follower, but he lacks the bloodthirsty initiative and reckless abandon. As a New England frontiersman, Israel is compared to Ethan Allen who has

a person like the Belgian giants; mountain music in him like a Swiss; a heart plump as Coeur de Lion's. Though born in New England, he exhibited no trace of her character. He was frank, bluff, companionable as a Pagan, convivial, a Roman, hearty as a harvest. His spirit was essentially Western; and herein is his peculiar Americanism; for the Western spirit is, or will yet be (for no other is, or can be), the true American one. (198)

Allen's is the third description of the "true" American type; yet on initial examination, it bears little resemblance to the other two, aside from its tendency, like other descriptions of historically famous Americans, to reduce the American character to a single list of traits embodied by the person under observation. As Brian Rosenberg notes, "Melville once more appears to be parodying the simplifying vision of most historical fiction, questioning the belief that there can ever be a single 'type' that defines a complex era or diverse culture just as he regularly questions the belief that there is a 'truth' or 'essence' to which any complicated individual or situation can be reduced" ("Israel Potter" 181). Even so, there are common elements among the three, different from the characteristics of the "type" identified. While most critics agree that Melville demonstrates more sympathy to Allen than to his other mythic figures, Allen does not figure as the paragon of western virtue that many claim (see McWilliams 188; Adler, 83-4). John Samson rightfully notes that the "same concerns for reputations and the ambivalence that undercuts it are evident in [Melville's] Franklin and Jones" color his portrait of Allen (184-5). Allen does share with Jones a ferocity, and with both Jones and Franklin, an "inevitable egotism" (Melville *Israel Potter* 198). Like Jones and Franklin, his calculatedly appealing "noble savagery" lowers the guard of the English who gape at the

stranger with “furred vest and ...leopard-like teeth” (193) and are then surprised by his ability to act in the manner of an English gentleman.

Although the ability to use attributes of the civilized men and the noble savage to play upon the sympathy and enthusiasm of others is the common link among the three men, this calculated power of persuasion is not explicitly identified as an “American” trait. Franklin’s American genius consists of his multiplexed trades; Jones’s “intrepid, unprincipled, reckless, predatory, [and] boundless ambition” (158) makes him the model of American expansion; and Allen’s pioneering, “Western” spirit makes him “American,” but it is his willingness to play the expected role of “braggart barbarian” that allows him to survive (200). What also aids all three, and distinguishes them from Israel, is their understanding of the niceties of social distinction and their ability to converse within that social framework. Despite the appearance of America as an egalitarian democracy, these three patriots are members of the American elite who hold power, whether it be social, political, or military. Allen very consciously describes himself as a gentleman—he uses the word “gentleman” nine times to describe himself within five pages—and establishes himself as both a skilled military officer worthy of a bribe of major-generalship and as a divinity scholar. Jones routinely cavorts with marchionesses and appreciates the distinctions of rank, gaining an admirer in the Earl of Selkirk for his chivalric deference to the Countess. Franklin, the mature beau of the French court and “caressed favorite of the highest born beauties” (61), designs shuttlecocks for duchesses (84) and holds high level diplomatic meetings with counts and dukes in his chambers. Although Israel has met a knight and the king, he does not converse as easily with the aristocracy as his compatriots, in part because he does not recognize class distinction, imagining that, as a democrat, such distinctions do not exist. Franklin, Jones, and Allen all know better. Jones displays particular amusement at Israel’s insistence in calling the Earl of Selkirk by the title “Mr.” when he “roguish[ly]” demands to know, “what, ain’t Mr. Selkirk in?”(143). Israel, refusing to acknowledge the overt social distinctions of England and France, does not recognize the tacit social distinctions at play in the American government as represented abroad. Not recognizing these distinctions, he does not recognize the power relations at work, nor that he is himself a powerless pawn to be used when convenient. Although he has made the acquaintance of several powerful people, his inability to

recognize the source of that power, or even that they exist on a separate plane, renders such acquaintanceships useless.

Of course, Melville makes the actual differences that separate social classes such flimsy facades, it is little surprise that Israel cannot recognize the distinctions. John Paul Jones epitomizes the hairline separation between savage and decorated military leader; Benjamin Franklin's manipulation of Jones and Israel lays bare the links between diplomat and confidence man; and Allen's indignation at those who do not treat him as a gentleman and the fierceness of his mockers' taunts suggest a schoolyard brawl rather than an adult political debate. Still, the distinctions exist and Israel's naïve, "peculiar, disinterested fidelity" to the American ideal of egalitarianism (40) dooms him to a life as a "plebian Lear or Oedipus" (214), a pawn used and discarded by those in power. Melville reveals the hypocrisy of those who pretend that American society makes no social distinctions and the failure of the egalitarian promise of the Revolution, a failure obscured by the lack of historical records of true "common men" like Israel Potter.

How does a social indictment of the callousness of America's governmental elite toward the common citizen affect the American spy novel, or distinguish it from its British counterpart? Few authors writing heroic spy novels would leave their heroes in situations as bleak as Melville leaves Israel, yet the distrust of the upper-classes, the predominance of common soldiers in the spy memoirs, and the suspicion of governmental bureaucracy as vaguely sinister, as well as the near anonymity of the spies lingers in even modern American spy novels. Israel's plight as exile demonstrates the shift in American policy from containment of factions who challenge the government domestically to winning friends and influencing nations through the arts of international diplomacy. Although, like Cooper and other early spy novelists, Melville writes about the Revolution, his perspective illustrates the shift in national policy from the postcolonial position of establishing the nation at home, to the colonializing perspective of other nations agreeing to the national will of the United States. Informed by the foreign policy of the mid-nineteenth-century, Melville exposes the international intrigue first explored by the earliest ambassadors of the United States. The memoirs of the early spies stress the necessity of spying as a way of protecting hearth and family even as they document the expansion of "the homeland" into Indian territory. Melville's novel, by

focusing on the diplomatic intrigue of Americans away from home, encapsulates the American search for a national identity within America's presentation of that still emerging national identity to the world. Israel, always longing for home and proud of his role as one of America's citizen-soldiers, is one of the first American spies who presents his globe trotting escapades, including terrorist attacks on British towns, as part of a defensive war. Although later American novels tend to explore the world more, as American's sphere of influence has grown since World War II, they still center the action at home or emphasize that the agent's sympathies lie at home. Israel's story, although that of an American at work abroad, reiterates his desire to return home and his preservation of American ideals, even if those ideals have little place in reality.

Drawing from the self-contradictory spy and military memoirs which present the difficulties the soldier/spy has encountered at the hands of the government he hopes will support him, Melville's novel also depicted the American literary spy's complicated relationship to the government. Melville, presenting his tale from a third person perspective, provides a fuller view than the memoirist's limited first person perspective. As Peter J. Bellis notes, Melville's third person perspective illuminates the limits of Israel's vision (614). From this greater distance, we can see the conflict between Israel's domestic desires and the self-interest which motivates the men who determine the national agenda. The spy's primary motivation stems from a desire to protect the family from the external enemy who seeks to impose an "illegal" (a definition which depends on one's political views) government to harass the spy, his family and neighbors, but he also remains wary even of the "legitimate" government lest it gain too much power. As such, it is always clear that the spy, although an employee of the government, rarely holds official power. Much of this separation of the spy from the central halls of government originated in the predominance of memoirs written by common soldiers denied half pay, but it continues in present day spy novels which often present powerful governmental elite using the spy and other governmental pawns similarly to the way Franklin and Jones used Israel, or even hoping to dispose of the spies by violence. In Tom Clancy's *Clear and Present Danger*, the president and his administration plan to sacrifice the soldiers they sent to support secret operations in Columbia, in violation of the Constitution, in order to hide the administration's illegal activity. In Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity*, the CIA not only abandons Bourne, who prior to suffering amnesia had been

in deep cover as a terrorist for years, but attempts to kill him without seeking to understand what happened. Melville first illuminated the stratification of power in the government; later writers have added violence to the apathy.

Melville's exploration of the working class spy as the pawn of governmental elites not only reinforces the "ordinariness" of American literary spies, it may have contributed to the malaise Bruce Merry identifies in the American novels which characterize the American hero as "a small man in a large organization" rather than the European model of the agent as "a large man in a small organization" (36). Although few spy writers allow their heroes to sink to the economic depths of Israel Potter, the spy as a member of middle class continues in modern novels as well. Jason Bourne, of *The Bourne Identity*, although an agent skilled in pretending to great wealth displays his middle class roots often in his astonishment at vast sums of money (Ludlum 58). Although an employee of a control group composed of people from the highest levels of government, he never reached a higher military rank than captain. Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan of *The Hunt for Red October* comes from a similarly humble middle-class background of mid-level government employee: a freelance analyst for the CIA, Ryan's primary occupation is civilian history professor at the United States Naval Academy. Although he gradually rises in rank at the CIA through successive novels, he remains an American middle-class everyman who is rewarded for hard work with a rise in rank and a moderate increase in pay. This emphasis on the humble roots of spies can be traced to the American celebration of class mobility, and the separation of the spy from the corruption of the ruling classes in the government.

Melville's novel can be read as the cynical despair of the inequity of American society and the obscurity of the Average American hero whose belief in the promise of democracy is tragically misplaced, or it can be read, as many of its contemporary reviewers did and later critics like Ray Browne do, as the patriotic celebration of the indomitable American patriotic spirit and the "hope in sheer animal endurance" which leads to "the obvious moral of the book, that men must stick together" (98). Modern American spy novels, tending to celebrate the status quo and the triumph of American values in the face of corrupt government officials and outside threats to the domestic security, seem more in concert with the later

reading, although Melville's ironic spy novel, and its illumination of the unspoken conflicts in spy memoirs, has left its mark on the American espionage canon.

Chapter Five

Women and the Spy Story

Women abound in other “thriller” genres like mystery stories, detective novels and crime thrillers, but they are often absent entirely and otherwise tend to occupy very narrow roles in modern American and British espionage fiction. They can be secretaries, potential targets of sexual conquest, villains to be converted, or all of these at once, but rarely anything else. Although women have enjoyed a growing presence in mystery writing and detective fiction, spy fiction largely remains one of the last bastions of (typically white) male-authored escapism.

The absence of women has a long history. Shortly after Cooper first penned *The Spy*, women writers tried their hands at this new form, the American historical romance, and many of their Revolutionary novels also featured spies. As the century progressed, and developments in cheap publishing, which flooded the market with quick reads targeted to both men and women, coincided with the growing female emancipation movement, some authors, both male and female, chose to feature a woman as their primary spy figure. The trend continued through and after the Civil War as the spies of the Revolution were exchanged for the spies of the Civil War, and many of the real female as well as the male spies of the war published their memoirs. Some female authors wrote moderately successful fictions, but women and spy stories combined awkwardly in the nineteenth century, and this awkwardness became more pronounced as the genre became more formulaic and melodramatic.

In this chapter, I will look at the presentation of female characters, and female spies in particular, by both male and female spy story authors. Compared to men, female authors demonstrated a greater familiarity with the domestic impacts of the war, a heightened sensitivity to “difference,” and a greater need to bring the war from the battlefield to their sphere of credibility, the home. Female characters may reflect this domestic focus, but more often, when they spy, female characters function as exotic interpretations of the spy. In their study of women and detective novels, Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan posit a number of reasons why writers create female detective characters including “novelty; dramatic effect (making the least-likely-person the sleuth instead of the culprit); in order to justify an unorthodox method of detecting; because

the character could be presented fancifully” (13). Many of these possible reasons hold for antebellum presentations of female spies, but additionally many of these women spies reveal a great deal about the division of patriotism between the domestic and political spheres, and the corresponding division of labor by gender, divisions which are much more severely drawn in fiction than in history. I will touch very briefly on some texts of the Civil War but only to sketch in the broadest terms the continuing trends and with the full realization that such a modest effort would barely scratch the surface of a vast Civil War spy literature.

Female Authors

The shortage of female spy authors has deep historical roots. Shortly after James Fenimore Cooper adapted the historical novel to American situations (providing a better fit with early American popular culture than the Gothic with which Charles Brockden Brown experimented), female authors also attempted to write this new, highly popular form of American literature. Women who tried their hands at antebellum spy fiction include: the anonymous “authoress” of *Morton* (1824); Eliza Lanesford Cushing in *Yorktown* (1826); Catharine Sedgwick in *The Linwoods* (1835); Ann S. Stephens in *Sir Henry’s Ward* (1846) and *Mary Derwent* (1858); Aria Ashland in *The Rebel Scout* (1850); Eliza Dupuy in *Ashleigh* (1854)⁶²; and Ellen T. H. Putnam in *Captain Molly* (1857). As with other early ventures into historical fiction, the results were mixed. Many women attempted to blend this new genre of spy narrative with the older genres of gothic, seduction novel, or captivity narrative which focused attention on the domestic sphere as an allegory for the national sphere. Sometimes such hybrids worked, sometimes not.

Both *Morton* and Eliza Cushing’s *Yorktown* demonstrate the attempt to combine strongly gothic elements with historical fiction, and many of the pitfalls inherent in such a combination, in particular the tendency for the greater emotional investment the reader has made in the gothic plot to overshadow the reader’s engagement in the national plot. In *Morton*, James Morton, the only son of a wealthy Windsor, Connecticut, man (presumably a gentleman farmer), returns home after attending school at Yale and marrying a local, well-born woman. Unbeknownst to him, his foster sister, Elvira, an Indian foundling his mother adopted, has been pining away for him while he was at school, and feels betrayed by his elopement.

After a nervous breakdown, she stays with a neighbor to recover when she meets the thoroughly evil Hargrave, the man Morton's wife, Virginia, was originally engaged to marry. They scheme to kidnap the Mortons' child, whose existence deprives Hargrave of his expected inheritance. The plot fails, and after a brief imprisonment, Elvira escapes and elopes with Hargrave. In the meantime the war has broken out. Morton raises a company and joins the army. Shortly after, he meets a mysterious mute Indian boy who pledges to serve him. Unbeknownst to Morton, the Indian boy is Elvira in disguise. They join just in time for the attack on Quebec, and Morton is captured under the generous parole terms offered to officers. While in Quebec, the Mortons (Virginia has followed along) renew their acquaintance with Colonel Anson, a Scottish officer, and his beautiful, consumptive daughter, Caroline, who pines for her true love, her father's ward, Captain Henry Clair, who has incurred her father's wrath by daring to love Caroline. In the meantime, the foppish, but fabulously wealthy, Captain Wilson, is courting Caroline and her father. He has greater luck with the father, who insists that Caroline marry the fop. Eventually, Caroline and Henry receive her father's blessing to marry, but during the wedding, Captain Wilson suffers from temporary insanity and shoots the groom dead. After regaining sanity, his remorse for the crime is so great that he commits suicide. Caroline, grief stricken, goes mad and then dies. Her father, utterly broken-hearted, dies shortly thereafter. Morton is exchanged and, after a brief visit home where he is attacked by Hargrave, but saved by Elvira who takes the knife, confesses all, and dies, he rejoins the American army, and immediately volunteers, like that other Yalie, Nathan Hale, to infiltrate the enemy's territory to determine their strength and position. Unlike Hale, Morton chooses to disguise himself as a peddler with a borrowed sack (the contents of which he is entirely ignorant). Despite his good intentions, and the seeming simplicity of masquerading as a peddler, he betrays himself by not having the faintest notion of how peddlers act (his undoing results from the unexpected appearance of Elvira's jewels in the sack), and by unveiling himself to a Tory acquaintance who was a soldier in his company until he turned Tory. He is captured, and sentenced by Sir William Howe to hang. Before he does, Virginia appears to plead for his life. It turns out that Howe had courted Virginia as well, and he remains quite bitter about losing her to Morton. Virginia pleads her case before the general, but to no avail. After a quick reconciliation with her father, who forgives her for eloping with Morton, she entreats him

to try to persuade Howe. He, too, has no luck, but his presence allows Morton to borrow his cloak and escape and the story to end.

The twists and turns of this plot are fairly representative of these antebellum historical spy romances by women. Although the two volume format, used by men as well, lent itself to intricate plotting, and some men, notably John Neal in *Seventy-Six* (1823), also attempted to combine a national war story with a Gothic novel, women's novels focus far more attention on the domestic Gothic plot. Neal's novel, not a spy story, splits its time between scenes of battle and camp life with many battle scenes and duels, and domestic life, when the male narrator, Jonathon Oadley, has become an amputee. Oadley's narrative focuses on the strange behavior of his mercurial tempered, consumptive brother, Archibald, as an unparalleled military leader and as a mysterious suitor to the narrator's fiancée's sister, probing the compatibility of the desired qualities of a military leader with those of a peacetime leader. *Morton*, in contrast, examines women's role in their husbands' lives and the threats made on wedded bliss and domestic security, whether they come from jilted lovers, overly protective parents, or the state which requires men to risk their lives. *Morton* presents exactly two battles and spends much of its time in the drawing rooms of Quebec where military rivals meet in the company of the ladies of the town. This novel, like many women's novels, focuses on personal relationships, particularly between women and men, personal histories, little action on the battlefield and little political discussion other than in the vaguest of terms. The concerns that propelled Cooper and other male writers, namely the shape of the national government and the quality of the people in the government, do not figure in these novels.

Catharine Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* more closely follows Cooper's model and avoids gothic twists and turns. She diverges from Cooper in altering the class distinctions, introducing more female types, and allowing more agency to her female characters. She succeeds well enough to have warranted six printings between 1835 and 1871. Still, Sedgwick too focuses most of the action through Isabella Linwood and spends many pages in the beginning of the book to establish the relationship of all of the characters prior to the war. In all, Sedgwick's narrative covers over ten years worth of history (compared to Cushing's twenty plus years). Cooper, Kennedy, and Simms, in contrast, jump into the war from the opening pages and focus on a

fairly short time period of a few months with a lot of battles, even if many are quite minor. Battle scenes and martial relationships predominate. Domestic scenes appear rarely, particularly in *Horse Shoe Robinson* and *The Partisan*. Although Simms's Revolutionary series comprises three books, each book is a self-contained whole which covers only a few months of action, and quickly covers the relationships developed in the previous volumes, in part because Simms features so little development. Although the women in these novels legitimate their heroes' commitment to domestic tranquillity, all of these authors lavish far more attention on male-male relationships, even if the relationship consists of a rivalry for the hand of a woman. In *The Spy*, Major Dunwoodie's relationship with Lieutenant Singleton is suggested to be as intimate as Dunwoodie's relationship with Frances. His aunt teases, "You speak of him as if he were your mistress," to which he answers, "I love him as one" (127). Even *Katherine Walton*, which Simms titles after his heroine, features more of Robert Singleton's interaction with male characters than female ones, including Katherine.

In contrast, women authors spend more time establishing domestic scenes and domestic relationships. Even when women take up the historical tale of Major André, they establish elaborate, often fictional, interpersonal relationships with the characters dropped into the pages of history. Ann S. Stephens's serialized *Sir Henry's Ward* in *Graham's Magazine* represented a bold departure from the evolving masculine tradition of spy novels as she romanticized the André story and turned the male-centered legend into a female-centered romance, featuring an English woman who cross-dressed as her male twin to stay by her man, Major André. Sedgwick's and Stephens's novels prove that women could make the spy novel into a female-centered genre, and demonstrate a similar blurring of the private and the public that both Nina Baym and Sharon M. Harris have noted in their work on female authored history. The authors do pay a price, however, in that they lose some of the political consequence, and hence the political justification for spying, of the spy novel proper.

Yet, despite the early fictional forays, Sedgwick's success and Stephens's boldness, the numbers of women who wrote spy novels remained very small. Stephens's much more conservative novel *Mary Derwent*, Ashland's *The Rebel Scout*, Dupuy's *Ashleigh* and Putnam's *Captain Molly* are the only other novels of the 1850s I have found even to mention spies in their plots and none of these significantly

challenge the status quo image of women in historical fiction. Why, one wonders, would women so rarely write about spies when so many women wrote historical romances, and so many of those were set during the Revolutionary war?

The reason may stem from the necessity of a military background for a spy story, and the uneasy relationship between women and war. Some feminist scholars have connected feminism, particularly the early brand of proto-feminism of the "Vision of the New Woman" of nineteenth century America, to peace movements and assert that there is a special connection between women and peace.⁶³ Such a connection would explain women's avoidance of the spy novel as a gendered avoidance of military concerns. However, as Sharon McDonald notes, the relationship between women and peace or war is rarely so tidy. American women writing during and after the Revolutionary War use the same martial language to communicate their patriotism as their male counterparts. As Linda Kerber notes, adherence to the ideal of "Republican Motherhood" gave American women a way to express their patriotism while preserving their domestic roles and began to change the prevailing notion that women were not "patriotic" (36). Although women could not enlist in the army, they could provide material and moral support by sacrificing for the war effort, as they have regularly been called to do in America's larger wars including the Civil War, World War I and, particularly, World War II, a war which transformed sacrifice for the war effort into a nationwide, moral-boosting, propaganda effort. Social observers may have doubted women's capacity for patriotism in the eighteenth century, but by the nineteenth century, magazines regularly featured tales of "female patriotism" which ranged from a widowed mother sacrificing her sons to the war effort, to women chasing British soldiers from their land with the help of their husbands' shotguns.

Still, even with similar capacity to equate martial conflict with glorious patriotic acts, women remained isolated from the required military environment of the spy novel. Although several women had served as camp followers during the war itself, their experiences were not well documented, and hence not preserved over the forty years that separated the war from the first novels. The memoirs that exist of women who traveled with the army tend to be those of British or Hessian officers' wives, like Lady Harriet Ackland and the Baroness Riesedal. Early in the war, and before, during the French and Indian War, the Americans

considered the British army's practice of travelling with the army wives and rejected it. Sanitation and housekeeping needs caused the leadership to recognize the value of a limited number of women working for the army, but the numbers were low, and primarily restricted to the wives of the lower ranks (Mayer 10). Most officers' wives stayed at home looking after the family business. The nineteenth-century literary convention of placing heroines squarely in the bourgeoisie removed the laboring camp followers from consideration as heroines.

The necessary military backdrop of the spy story required some knowledge of the movement of the army (or at least a reasonable pretense of such knowledge) and by the time women were writing about the army in the 1820s and beyond, the army was becoming more professional and eliminating its female followers along with the other civilians who had attached themselves to the army during the Revolution (Mayer 276; Trustam 3).⁶⁴ While a y chromosome would not necessarily make one a military expert, women were seen not only as removed from military matters, including spying, but increasingly as unable to understand them. Thus Sedgwick, when introducing *The Linwoods*, apologizes for presuming to address military matters, but assures her readers, "Historic events have been avoided, the writer happily being aware that no effort at 'A swashing and martial outside' would conceal the weak and unskilled woman" (xii). Because spying only makes sense within an American context as a military tool, in order to address spying credibly, female authors had to demonstrate some understanding of how spying would aid in military strategy, and to do so, had to be able to demonstrate some understanding of military strategy. The danger lay in demonstrating so much military knowledge that their heroines would be "unsexed."

Eliza Cushing, however, attempts to demonstrate that women could understand the finer points of a military battle. In *Saratoga* (1824), she features a heroine who routinely debates the military strategy employed by both the American army and the British army, identifying the American army's victory at Saratoga as evidence of the moral superiority of the cause. Catherine identifies herself as an officer's daughter (although her father first sees action during her lifetime when she is in her late teens), so her curiosity regarding the battle, her bravery, and her innate nursing skills are vaguely suggested to be genetically acquired as a woman of a military family. She demonstrates her real pluck, however, in her

increasingly more open support of the American cause to her British officer father and his British officer friends. Cushing's narrative, however, is not a military primer, and depicts only the battle of Saratoga, in a very confused manner, and a skirmish between two scouting parties. Most of the discussion of military tactics resembles armchair quarterbacking more than real military analysis and the bulk of the discussion rehashes the Battle of Saratoga as a proof of American worthiness for self-rule. Of course, none of Cushing's male contemporaries delved much deeper into the minutia of battle and, as Kerber notes, part of Cushing's purpose is demonstrating her heroine's frustration over being excluded from the scenes of history (272). In *Yorktown*, Cushing makes Maude Mansel a martial actor, leading a charge and firing alongside the male soldiers, thus giving her credibility when she acts as a spy within the British camp. Maude, however, does not gather any military information as far as we see.

While faithful depiction of martial encounters does not seem required for any historical novel, women possibly felt, more than men, their apparent exclusion from the field of battle as a hindrance to faithful representation of the military situations required for a spy novel. The very small peacetime standing army and the limited role of the Army in the settled East meant that most of the men writing novels had little actual exposure to military matters (Cooper's experience as a peacetime naval midshipman and later as a peacetime militia officer was considerably greater than that of his contemporaries, yet none of it included wartime service) and were as likely as not to know no more of a battle than what they could read in a history book. Still, the second amendment and the national mythology of the citizen militia meant that every man *might* be a soldier. Women were entirely shut out of that possibility. Although they could as easily read military histories as their male counterparts (and many, like Mercy Otis Warren and Hannah Adams, wrote those histories), they could not claim the same constitutional right to imagine themselves as having a place on the battlefield. It may be that as a result they minimized as much as possible actual battle scenes. Although Judith Sargeant Murray's *The Traveller Returned* has many of the elements of a classic spy plot, including, a handsome and heroic soldier, treacherous foreigners, disguise, hidden identity, and mention of Major André, it is a domestic drama of a man spying on his wife, not a political spy drama depicting the fall of British rule. Even those stories that directly address the political drama tend to avoid the battlefield.

Morton's author sets much of the novel during Captain Morton's sentence as a prisoner of war in Quebec, giving many occasions for tea parties, but few for battle. Although the heroine of Ashland's *The Rebel Scout* is a colonel's daughter and lives in camp, the plot has little to do with the Revolution, and the bulk of the action takes place in a secluded stone cabin deep in the woods to which she has been kidnapped. The spy who kidnapped her spends most of his time out of view of the reader, presumably gathering intelligence, yet the activity is never described. In *Sir Henry's Ward*, her serialized novel about Major André, Ann Stephens eliminates the capture, court martial and execution of André, communicating the particulars of the tragic lynchpin of her story second hand. Her *Mary Derwent* is even more coy about its military connections: the war and the spy subplot do not appear until two hundred fifty pages into the four hundred page book.

Stephens's novels do not answer the question of whether the apparent avoidance of martial material had as much to do with the intended audience as with the author herself. *Sir Henry's Ward* appeared in *Graham's Magazine*, a ladies' magazine which featured colored plates of the latest sentimental fashions of 1846, featuring wasp waists and gracefully sloping shoulders and simple hairdos.⁶⁵ The story is highly sentimental, including the sentimental woman's answer to Poe's dead, beautiful woman— orphaned, consumptive boy-girl twins. (Twins appear frequently in these novels, particularly boy and girl fraternal twins who look like identical twins.) One of these twins is the child-fiancée of Major André. Delia's age is never given, but one gets the impression she is no more than fifteen, and possibly as young as fourteen. When she is forbidden to join her lover and her ward, Sir Henry Clinton, in America, her brother James, allowed to go by virtue of his sex, agrees to switch places with her. We next see Delia dressed as James, and addressed as "the boy," so those who missed the first installment might be surprised when Stephens reveals that "the boy" is Delia at the end, but several hints appear in the intervening installments. In the meantime, we also meet Isabel, who loves André (who never sought her affection as anything more than as a friend) but is courted by General Benedict Arnold. We also meet the brother and sister team of Paul and Laura Longtree. Paul is Arnold's sole creditor, having bought all of Arnold's debts, and Laura is the woman Arnold seduced, and whom he abandoned in pursuit of Isabel and her substantial dowry. Once Isabel has realized that André loves another, she agrees to marry Arnold, unconscious of his true evil.

Given this cast of characters and collection of soap opera plots, it is little wonder that we never see the battlefield, or any military action aside from André's meeting with Arnold. Although we see André's panic at discovering himself behind enemy lines and required to dress in a disguise, we don't see André's capture by the militia men, nor do we see the court martial. We learn that André will be executed when Delia, as James, solicits Isabel's help in capturing Arnold for the Americans. Women's intuition allows the women to connect and for each to see what André could not about the other; Delia can see Isabel's love for André, and Isabel can see that "James" is really Delia. Stephens also "refrains" from depicting the execution scene, although she expresses heartfelt emotion for the loss of the noble young man. The story closes at Sir Henry's country estate in England, where the story opened, and where James and Delia reunite after the sad events in America. "Both were pale, and their large blue eyes, so remarkable for a beautiful resemblance to each other, were burning with that unearthly lustre which marks the quick steps of consumption" (276). The story ends with the gloomy conclusion that shortly after this scene, "the twins [came] down those marble steps again close together, but funeral palls of glowing velvet swept over them, and a band of weeping mourners followed them down to the churchyard" (276). Thus the tragedy of the story is not André's as much as Delia's and James's. By distancing the reader from the military action of André's drama, the spying at the heart of his execution fades into the background.

While the story is not unique in its sentimentalism, or even in its studied avoidance of military elements, it is singular when one considers that the same woman who wrote it also would write a military history of the Civil War in 1862. Stephens's *Pictorial History of the War for the Union: A Complete and Reliable History of the War from Its Commencement to Its Close*, although a bit optimistic about how much history there would be before the war was over, is unarguably a military history. The title of the book leaves little doubt regarding her sympathies, but she tells her readers:

The political history of a nation, when it emerges into armed strife, is generally a record of the prejudices and of passion: civil war is the result. In this work, the author deals not with the causes, but with the terrible events which spring out of them: avoiding so far as possible the threatening cloud of political dissension that preceded and still follows the tempest.

Time, which will clear up obscurities and remove passion, and the intellect of great statesmen are necessary, before the political and military history of this war can be fittingly united. (7)

The two volumes record the military campaigns of the war through 1862, including maps, and eyewitness reports. In addition, Stephens draws her information from “authentic reports from the War Department, [and] the official statements of commandants on the battlefield” (8). While on the one hand this historical work proves little other than Stephens’s flexibility in different genres, on the other hand, it also demonstrates her willingness to satisfy entirely different audiences. Technically, *Sir Henry’s Ward*, *Mary Derwent*, and the *Pictorial History* are all historical works, but the conception of history in each is so different, it would be difficult to maintain the argument that Stephens’s avoidance of military action in her historical fiction proves that she was unsure of her credibility as a chronicler of battles and war scenes. It may indicate that she considered her audience carefully or that same readers approached different works with different expectations. As George Dekker has noted, both men and women read historical romances, but that does not mean that equal numbers of men and women read each historical romance, or that, typically, each gender responded similarly to any given historical romance, or that all historical romances figure history similarly.

It is helpful to remember that the American historical romance, and its subgenre the spy novel, developed as a self-consciously masculine form adopted by Cooper to distinguish his novels from female-authored novels of manners. On the one hand, this development of the spy novel as “masculine” seems counterintuitive since, as discussed in chapter two, so many conventions of the spy novel sprang from seduction novels (as in the depictions of André) and captivity narratives (as in the depictions of Captain Hale and his more fortunate American fictional successors). Both forms not only were well known by female authors, but also often featured female protagonists, the seduction novel particularly so. However, both forms had been adapted from the cautionary tales to private women about the dangers that awaited them in public, into tales of the victimization of men by the predatory British government, thus changing what had been a private-to-public dynamic to the internal conflicts within a political sphere. While the traditional seduction novel and captivity narrative focus on the personal differences of gender, race and, to some extent,

class, the masculine spy versions negate those differences, as both victim and victimizer are white males and most often officers, replacing racial and gender difference with national difference. André's story became a male seduction tale, from which women would learn little about proper social behavior within the personal realm of courtship, but where men could learn the importance of honor and trust and the necessity for the seeming rigidity of the political sphere. Feminized victim though he was, André's is a masculine tragedy of a man seduced by promises of glory and privilege to abandon his honor and good name. His tragedy, more than an individual tragedy, is the political catastrophe of a nation.

As a captivity narrative, Nathan Hale's story inspired several spy captivity stories in which well-to-do men, unable to dissemble while spying, are caught while in disguise. Unlike Mary Rowlandson and other captivity narrative authors, they are rewarded by release not for their faith in God, but for their patriotism and faith in the new nation. This version of the captivity narrative is inherently conservative, privileging the well-to-do captive as more trustworthy and possessing greater than average integrity, and arguing that their static class position prepares them to lead, not to strike out on their own. Still, it does problematize the class structure of the new nation. Kennedy's *Horse Shoe Robinson*, for example, follows this plot in the capture of Major Butler, the well-born hero of the novel, yet Horse-Shoe Robinson, his aide and the novel's Leatherstocking figure, is the true star of the narrative, having the greatest number of adventures, but also closing the narrative frame, set over fifty years after the novel's main events. A variant captivity narrative is the mistaken captivity when the alleged spy did not actually spy, but was in disguise to see a loved one. Henry Wharton, of Cooper's *The Spy*, is an example. In early male-authored versions of these captivity narratives, the lower-class servant of the alleged spy orchestrates the release, suggesting a triumph of the classless ingenuity of the new nation, or the willing subservience of the under-classes to the recognized American aristocracy. Depending on the author, sometimes both messages are conveyed at once. Cooper's self-sacrificing Harvey Birch recognizes the innate authority not only of Washington and the rest of the novel's Virginian "natural aristocracy," but also of the Tory Whartons. Kennedy's Robinson is static within the social hierarchy, and seems content to remain so, or to escape society altogether as a frontiersman. One gets the sense, from Robinson's deference to Butler in the early scenes, as well as Colonels Williams's,

Shelby's and Clarke's willingness to divert their two hundred cavalry troops to attempt a rescue (2:19-29), that Robinson risks life and limb for Butler not merely because he is a friend, but because he is a superior officer whose place is at the head of troops, not in jail, nor even scouting enemy territory. Simms, creating a high-born hero who can do anything including spying and risky rescue missions, places Singleton's intended father-in-law, Colonel Walton, in the position of captive, and has Singleton rescue him.

When women write a version of the captivity plot with a male alleged spy, generally a woman orchestrates the release. In Sedgwick's *The Linwoods*, Herbert Linwood, the Whig son of a Tory father, is captured while visiting his family in disguise, and is released by the family's free black servant, Rose in a plan devised by Isabella Linwood. In *Yorktown*, Cushing has Edward Leslie's company attempt to rescue him, but it is his sister Helen and her extra dress that allow him to escape successfully. James Morton is captured in a very Nathan Hale-like situation, but the primary difference between Morton and Hale is that Morton has a brave wife who manages to visit him with her father, and smuggles Morton out dressed as the father. Women claiming personal favors from the capturing general, who in a chivalric moment pledges undying aid to the lady, is another common method for gaining the release of or concessions for their male loved ones. The pledge is often attached to a piece of jewelry. Some male authored novels, especially during the combination of (modest) gender enlightenment and publishing boom of the 1840s and 1850s created action novels apparently aimed to a female market, will use a similar strategy in the more love centered melodramatic novels, especially those titled after women, such as Emerson Bennett's *Rosalie Du Pont*, Charles J. Peterson's *Agnes Courtenay* (1847) and Benjamin Barker's *Ellen Grafton* (1845), although the women's efficacy in release is often much reduced.

Female captives, much rarer in spy narratives, most often serve as another obstacle as a type of Herculean task to the hero of the spy novel. In these versions, the captivity narrative veers toward a more brutal version of the traditional seduction novel as seduction is replaced with threatened rape as a manifestation of the increased violence of the spy novel. In such novels, like *The Rebel Scout* and *Captain Molly*, the heroine is saved by her true love, reinforcing the heroism of the hero who, as Reuben Epps does in *Captain Molly*, may employ spying methods to rescue the heroine. In these cases, the captivity narrative

steers the novel toward a prototype of modern “romance” novels⁶⁶ more than toward a pure prototype of the spy thriller; yet they remind us of the common roots of all modern “thriller” conventions. Because women appear so rarely as spies, they generally are captured as bait for the spy, or as ill-gotten plunder for the villain. In *Fatal Environment*, Richard Slotkin notes that this transformation of the traditional Puritan captivity narrative, using single white, wealthy women rather than Puritan working-class mothers, shifts the focus from Christian values to elitist values (102). This shift is certainly in keeping with the social conservatism of Cooper’s novel as the model of the genre. But the replacement of Native American captors with British captors shifts the focus from racial difference to national difference, revealing American anxiety about distinguishing the new nation from Britain. The linkage of the captivity narrative to spying also reveals the different relationship between the Americans and the British from that between the Anglo-Americans and the Native Americans. Spying implies one lawful nation gathering secret information about another lawful nation. Although Anglo settlers would “scout” Indian positions, and “monitor” Indian activities, they would rarely describe such actions as “spying.” Even as the spying defines the relationship between Britain and America as an international one, the equation of the British with Native American captors signals that it was a particularly hostile one. As America would later engage in wars in which national difference could be more easily stereotyped by difference in language, religion, or skin color, the racial epithets would replace national ones, and it would be harder to find sympathetic characters on the other side. Still, the savagery of the British captors often compares unfavorably with that of the Native Americans in these captivity narratives, revealing that the primary opposition in spy narratives is national (or political in the case of savage Tories, and later during the Civil War) no matter how racial the language might become.

In addition to maintaining the socially conservative distinctions of class, the captivity of women in these novels also preserves the conventional roles of women as innocent victims. While they might be threatened with forced marriage or rape and defamation, they are not called upon to sacrifice their lives for their country. Men do that. As such, unlike André, Hale and their literary progeny, the women are almost never threatened with execution, even when they assist the male captive to escape and remain in his place, or actually spy themselves. The avoidance of even the suggestion of executing women spies stems from both

prevailing sentiment that one could judge a society by the way it treats its women (as Alice, the maid in *The Rebel Spy*, says “Civilized nations don’t very often kill defenceless females” [20]), and the tacit presumption that women are incapable of rationally performing an action which would warrant execution. The possibility of women executed for spying is so unthinkable that when women do spy, they are not captured, or escape quickly thereafter. Even evil women spies are not executed by the hero or the government, but die of their own accord, or from a miscarriage of their evil plots. Maude Mansel kills herself, and Helen Ruthven, the spiteful Tory woman who unsuccessfully attempts to kidnap George Washington in Sedgwick’s *The Linwoods*, is doomed to a life of misery in England, trapped in a mutually unhappy marriage with the Tory love interest, Jasper Meredith. The practice continues even in modern spy thrillers where, as Bruce Merry notes, executing women is not done by the side of righteousness and justice; villainous female spies either escape, or are killed by either the bad guys or another woman (94).

Not all spies fail in their missions, but the intrepid spy who actually gathers information is remarkably rare in female authored texts. When such a spy does appear, he may be a despicable villain, like *Mary Derwent*’s Captain Walter Butler, a cowardly British officer who incites the Indians of the Wyoming Valley to attack the settlers and seeks to deflower the heroine’s sister. Stephens seems particularly fond of making the successful, or at least surviving, spy a wretched individual and traitor. Her portrait of Benedict Arnold in *Sir Henry’s Ward* as a base seducer of innocent women, shameless embezzler, and would-be murderer is one of the fiercest in the André/Arnold canon.

Even if they spy for the Americans, like Cushing’s Maude of *Yorktown* or Ashland’s Gilbert Wolcott of *The Rebel Scout*, successful spies in these novels are not admirable characters. Unlike Harvey Birch, Gilbert Wolcott, the Rebel Scout, is a brooding man motivated by a long standing grudge against a British officer, Colonel Graham, who had eighteen years before seduced and abandoned Wolcott’s wife, leaving her pregnant with a child during whose birth she died. He chooses to aid the American cause through the ignoble role of spy since his wife’s desertion has robbed him of his pride. Although he has a legitimate complaint against Graham, an arrogant man who has refused to acknowledge the child he fathered, Wolcott exceeds the bounds of retribution by kidnapping Graham’s legitimate daughter. Likewise, Maude Mansel has

a very tenuous hold on sanity and has entirely abandoned moral scruples. Although spying is the least of her social transgressions, her willingness to don a masculine costume and infiltrate the British camp demonstrates her tendency to forget herself to extremes.

Cushing also has Edward Leslie infiltrate the British camp in disguise as the result of a misguided attempt at heroism. He learns no information, but places his life in jeopardy when the British capture him since he is now a known "spy." Spies who get themselves caught provide a point of sympathy and female identification, as the spy is in the feminized position of being subjected to the whims of men, and Edward is the recipient of much of Cushing's sympathy. Successful spies, on the other hand, can only succeed through duplicity and choose the ignominy of spying only because they have renounced all claims to an honorable life. More than the spies of male authors, these spies prove Christine Bold's conclusion that patriotic spies have disguises thrust upon them and are inept at maintaining them (22).

Catharine Sedgwick's spy character, Elliot Lee, is an exception to this rule, and truly prefigures the American heroic spy of humble origins but natural ability, which would provide the model for most American spy heroes after him. However, Sedgwick wrote a novel that self-consciously answered Cooper's *The Spy* and challenged its assumptions about heroism and class. The other women's novels do not appear to be as concerned with *The Spy* in particular as much as the spy novel in general. In both Cushing and Ashland's works, the spies are American sympathizers, yet in their acts of spying are not celebrated at all. As in most spy novels, the intelligence they gather is either excluded from the text, or is irrelevant to the prosecution of the battle. Coupled with the negative portrait of these spies who are beyond the bounds of propriety, the lack of useful knowledge defines the entire profession as a marginally acceptable one which only the most unsavory of characters practice.

Cushing casts aspersions on the practice even in *Saratoga*, which does not actually feature anyone who spies, only those who attempt to pass information and those who have been accused of spying. A possible secret courier mission occurs early in the book, as the novel's villain, Forrester (an Irishman living under an assumed name), attempts to corrupt the secret Tory-sympathizer, Richard Hope, to deliver a warning about an American attack on the British fort at Saratoga. The mission is foiled by the American-

sympathetic Native American, Ohmeina. Forrester, although not directly labeled a spy, is a traitor who managed to ruin the life of Mr. Spenser (another Irishman living under an assumed name), one of his American compatriots, by accusing him of being a spy. As in other spy novels, the perversion that is military justice has condemned the innocent man on the solitary evidence of Forrester's unsubstantiated claim, causing him to flee as if guilty. Cushing's novel is one of the few female-authored texts that attaches blame to the American government, which is often the target of much criticism in male-authored texts, as in *The Spy* and *The Partisan*.⁶⁷

While all Revolutionary spy novels, plays, and some memoirs refer, explicitly or implicitly, to the legends of Major André or Captain Hale, women's Revolutionary spy stories often refer to the women's legends of the Revolution: those of Jane McCrea and Molly Pitcher. McCrea's story demonstrates some of the difficulty of making the spy story a woman's story. McCrea was the fiancée of a British officer, David Jones, who sent a party of American Indians to escort her to the British camp. Before she arrived, she was murdered by her escorts. Although McCrea had been a loyalist sympathizer, her murder galvanized American resentment against both the British, for exposing their women to such dangers, and their Native American allies. Her story (although somewhat fictionalized) appears in its entirety in *Captain Molly* and is referenced directly in *The Rebel Scout*. The McCrea story provided a domestic story within the military story of the Revolution, and demonstrated the risks women faced, as well as the unreliability of their self-proclaimed protectors. Margaret R. Higonnet, in her study of gendered differences in depictions of civil wars, notes that "sexual politics can become an overt political issue" in those wars which take place on "home" territory as the political invades the domestic sphere for women (80). If one agrees with the presumption that the American Revolution was the nation's first civil war, as did many of the authors of the nineteenth century, the McCrea story is but one instance of the sexualization and domestication of the Revolutionary conflict as the political is figured as the personal. The spy story suggests that when the political invades the personal space, it does so through the spy's conscious action of bringing the political into a domestic realm, as Harvey Birch does by bringing his intelligence into the Whartons' home. McCrea's

story, on the other hand, demonstrates an invasion of the political into women's personal space, over which women have no control.

Of course, not every woman was depicted as a victim; in fact, many examples exist of strong women taking patriotic action in the war. Tales of "female patriotism" abounded, and every colonial town seems to have its own legend of the woman who gave her all to the Revolution whether by sacrificing her sons to the war or single-handedly scaring away the redcoats.⁶⁸ As a national legend, Molly Pitcher probably best epitomizes the extent of "derring-do" allocated to women. Most historians identify Pitcher as Mary Ludwig Hays, a camp follower who earned the nickname "Molly Pitcher" by bringing pitchers of water to her husband and others during battle. When her husband fell during the battle at Monmouth, New Jersey (1778), she took his place at the cannon. Her story has often been conflated with that of Margaret Corbin, who also replaced her husband at the cannon, during the battle at Fort Mifflin, New York in 1776, and has passed into the realm of American fable.⁶⁹ On the surface, Pitcher's tale suggests a natural pairing with female spy stories, but her role as a combatant is carefully contained within her role as a wife, and by its definition as a one-time occurrence. In fiction, the transgressive potential of the story is further confined. Putnam's *Captain Molly*, nominally about Molly Pitcher, features only one battle. In fact, in Putnam's version, Molly is not a camp follower at all, but appears at battle at Monmouth only because she and her husband, an officer on furlough, live at Monmouth and he joins the fighting in their backyard for the day. Although Putnam tries to give Molly the soul of a Joan of Arc who declares, "I would rather be a warrior. There is no study I like at all but history, and I like that because I can find out all about the wars" (81), she also makes her a high-born young lady, as removed as possible from the wives and girlfriends of enlisted men who hired out to do the army's laundry, cooking and cleaning. Camp followers, typically lower class and sometimes unmarried, were often the subject of scandalous speculation. Despite her bellicose rhetoric, Molly is nothing if not a romantic heroine who faints and suffers debilitating fevers as much as any sentimental young lady. After her adventures in the war, she eventually settles down into a proper wife and "a new tenderness, born of maternal love, [which] gradually moulded [*sic*] her womanhood into a lovelier shape. Not now, by the wild impulses of her own will did she seek to regulate her life, but by that faith of heart which has truly profited

by affliction, she trusted in Heaven for all wisdom and guidance" (339). Molly is a heroine only as long as she does minimum military duty and puts down the sword for the sewing needle once the war has ended. Given these constrictions on Molly's military potential, her potential as a spy is even more limited. Spying is left to her intrepid lover, Reuben Epps.

One might think, with the prominence of disguise in spy novels, including men dressing in drag as in *The Journal of Mr. John Howe*, *The Spy*, and *The Linwoods*, that some women would appear dressed as male soldiers. Although some women dressed as men to fight in battle, cross-dressing military women rarely occupy the early spy stories, or if they do, they rarely match the reality of a woman who so fools others in her impersonation as a man. Cross-dressing women appear more often in both male and female authored texts as the century progresses and women's emancipation becomes a topic of serious consideration, but cross-dressing women in fiction tend toward androgyny as women impersonating young boys as valets or servants, rather than the more disruptive gender transformation of women into men with guns. Women authors, in particular, avoided depicting women in convincing male drag. Stephen's Delia of *Sir Henry's Ward* dresses as her twin brother, a consumptive youth of about fifteen, but in such wild and fantastical costumes that one wonders if perhaps the "boy" is more than a little feminine in "his" wardrobe preferences. She describes James in "fanciful" outfits of blue velvet, and a white hat with a long, white feather. Cushing, although she arms Maude, never so fully "unsexes" her that she convinces anyone she is a man except the foolish British soldiers. All the Americans recognize Maude as Maude. Since Cushing never moves the action to the British camp, we do not know how convincingly she impersonates a man. Even the account of her in the American camp is provided, second hand, through a letter from Edward to Helen. Elvira of *Morton* is perhaps the most convincing, best armed cross-dressed servant, but as a Native American "male" servant, she is already infantilized, and does not threaten white American manhood. She wields her tomahawk only to protect Morton.

Male authors, however, probed the gender disruption more closely, if only because more disturbed by the prospect. Indeed, some seem haunted by the specter of the female soldier who so thoroughly disrupts the gender roles laid out to the advantage of men. Until the cross-dressing women soldiers of the Civil War

began to write their memoirs, cross-dressing female soldiers were written of only by men. Even Deborah Sampson Gannett's memoir, titled *The Female Review* (1797) was written by a man, Herman Mann. *The Female Marine* (1812-1815), a fictional narrative of a woman who escaped from a brothel by dressing as a man and enlisting in the Marines during the War of 1812, was probably written by the male publisher, Nathaniel Coverly, Jr., or by one of his male hack writers (Cohen 359). William Dunlap's reworking of *André* (1798), *The Glory of Columbia: Her Yeomanry* (1803), features a farmer's daughter, Sally, as a cross-dressing would-be soldier, and Mordechai Noah's play *She Would be a Soldier* (1819) is about the folly of a woman who enlists in the army as a man to keep an eye on her boyfriend. Even in their curiosity about the prospect, they condemn women who would so transgress the gender boundaries: Dunlap and Noah both ridicule the women who "would be soldiers" and quickly expose them, yet clearly are discomfited by the prospect. These cross-dressing women lay bare the social construction of gender, and expose the lack of any "essential" difference between the sexes, a difference required to justify the exclusion of women from the public sphere and political power, thus belying the "natural" order which established male "superiority." Women, perhaps desirous of readily identifying their heroines as women and thus representative of the gender rather than women whose identity as women could be open to question, seem to have had less interest in exploring the possibility of women passing as men.⁷⁰ During and shortly after the Civil War, women who had cross-dressed, including Emma Edmonds and Loreta Janeta Velazquez, would publish their narratives, taking great pride in their ability to pass as convincing men, but they had no precedent in fiction by women.

In part, women's maintenance of gender roles in texts can be traced to the historical position of the women writing these novels. The rise of women writers occurred coincident with the rise of a cult of domesticity, one which, as both Nancy Cott and Mary Beth Norton note, had less to do with the overt subordination of women than the shaping of a feminine sphere of influence (Cott 7-8; Norton 20). Indeed, as Susan Coultrap-McQuin notes, both poles of the view of women in the nineteenth century—the conservative "Cult of True Womanhood" and the liberal "Vision of New Womanhood"—asserted similar beliefs in women's essential morality, spirituality, and nurturance (10). The difference, according to Coultrap-McQuin, lay in whether women should bring these qualities to bear outside the domestic sphere. Given the

model spy's reliance on a military mission, deception, and patriotism above all else, these essential qualities of women render them incompatible with spying. Certainly, the spy story does not lend itself to the standard plot of the most popular genre for and by women which Nina Baym has identified in her book, *Woman's Fiction*. That plot, of a young woman who must make her way in the world after facing and surmounting a host of difficulties and becomes a self-made woman who, when she gives herself in marriage, does so only to a proven soul mate (11-12), does not lend itself to easy adaptation to a wartime setting, a necessary component in the spy story. Also, requiring as it does, focus on the young woman making her way in the world, the only way to incorporate a spying plot would be to make the young woman a spy, taking her out of the domestic, familial sphere of woman's fiction.

While the similar focus on the individual and individual actions in both spy novels and woman's fiction would seem to allow for some commonality between the two, the separation of the private and the public sphere renders the two incompatible. The reward for successful navigation of difficulties in woman's fiction is the secure position of a woman in the domestic world of marriage and eventual motherhood. The reward for the spy is the preservation of the American government and possibly, in the heroic spy fiction, a place in that public sphere as a person of influence. Some women brought the spy into a domestic setting, but it was exceedingly difficult to take the domestic character out of the setting and make her a spy. Woman's fiction, requiring women to be true to themselves and others, tolerates no unpunished deception on the part of the heroine, again making it ill-suited for consolidation with spy fiction, even heroic spy fiction which reveals the spy's inner nature through physical typology. The conclusion of a successful woman's fiction novel, the young woman's spiritual growth, shares little similarity to the successful outcome of a spy novel, the preservation of liberty for not only the spy but the entire nation. I don't not mean to suggest that women's novels could not be political, or to deny the profound political implications of the seduction novel, the captivity narrative, or woman's fiction, but in these cases, the political message is delivered allegorically or symbolically. In spy novels, even if the message is no more profound than "Americans are good guys and good guys win," it is stated baldly.

Because of their negotiations between the political and private spheres, women differ from men in the way they depicted the two sides of the war and the power relationships within the new nation. Early male-authored spy novels were more immediately concerned with the postcolonial settlers' claims of establishing a new government separate from the British empire than delving into the whites' "right" to govern the new nation. For male authors, this meant establishing American Whig men as equal or superior to English or Tory men as leaders and operators in the political sphere. To do this, they had to erase the socially constructed differences which justify policies of colonialism by Britain over American settlers. They would later substitute these for equally socially constructed differences of nationalism which are treated as innate, although they often depend as much on where one chooses to live as on where one was born. Once this nationalist difference was established, male authors would tackle the colonizing side of the spy novel paradigm, and reassert the colonizing differences over the Native Americans, African Americans, and, after the Civil War, over Americans living south of the Mason-Dixon line. African American servants, thoroughly domesticated in the eyes of the conservative authors earlier in the century, serve as props to illustrate the wealth of the heroes rather than political players in the struggle for freedom. Occasionally, by demonstrating the white protagonist's ability to don an African disguise and the African American character's inability to shed his "Otherness," novelists would assert white dominance over the African American characters, just as the occasional loyal Native American servant would be employed to link the hero with a "natural right" to govern the land. Depictions of Native Americans clashing with settlers on the ever expanding frontier would detract the reader from focussing on the central conflict as the novelists figure the Revolution as a war between white men.

Women, shut out of the new government by virtue of their gender, seem far less concerned with establishing difference between Whig and Tory women than their male counterparts are with establishing difference between Whig and Tory men. In fact, gender is often a greater bond than politics is a separation. Virginia Morton's best friend is the tragic Scottish beauty Caroline Anson. Sedgwick's British noblewoman, Lady Anne, becomes a virtual sister and then a real sister-in-law to Isabella Linwood. Ashland's Margaret Graham is an English gentlewoman and half-sister to American Ruth Wolcott. Tory Jane McCrea is a

sisterly influence on Molly in *Captain Molly*. Political conversions are not uncommon in female-authored spy novels as women learned to love the politics of their true loves.⁷¹ Given the slight political influence a woman could hope to have in the earliest part of the century, it is little wonder that partisan politics become such a minor concern. Sharon M. Harris, in the introduction to the collection *Redefining the Political Novel*, and Barbara Bards and Suzanne Gossett, in their book *Declarations of Independence*, are correct in noting that women of the period did write “political” novels, but these spy novels are not political novels. Both Harris’s analysis and Bards and Gossett’s note that the political issues addressed domestic (as opposed to international) issues, and issues regarding basic civil rights like suffrage and rights of property for disenfranchised Americans. While one might read moments of the American struggle for freedom in *The Linwoods*, for example, as a rebellion against patriarchal authority in general (extending Fliegelman’s paradigm presented in *Prodigals and Pilgrims* of modeling the struggle against British authority as a revolt against the father), it would be a mistake to push this too far. *The Linwoods* is the most overtly political of these female-authored novels, but Bards and Gossett’s reading of Herbert Linwood’s release by Rose as an instance of civil disobedience against authority (31) misunderstands the common trope of the captivity in spy narrative and does not account for the complicated power relationship between the servant, who risks imprisonment for the master, and the master, who by virtue of his “whiteness” can pass for any subordinate. Gender bonding in these novels recognizes the common political position of women across the artificial divide of nationality. Debates over representational government and taxation are minor disagreements when one cannot vote or own property. Indeed, the common sisterhood of these novels could explain why so few women wrote admirable spy characters. Not only does spying require a war setting, it also requires the national enmity between nations who would wage war and spy against one another. If sisterhood trumps nationality, one would not spy against one’s sister.

Given the many possible explanations for why women did not write many spy novels, one begins to marvel that as many women did. Although women wrote thrillers, the increasing masculinization of the military, the necessity for a military motivation and credible authority for discussing military events in spy novels, and the need for an audience who would seek out a female author to satisfy those appetites appears to

have discouraged women from writing these texts. Other forms of the thriller, the psychological thriller favored by Louisa May Alcott and others, the “highly wrought” novel (the precursor of the modern gothic) of Ann Stephens and Eliza Dupuy, to name a few, and, lately, the detective novel, seem to have been more accessible to female authors because so many of those forms can occur primarily in the domestic sphere, a sphere in which women’s authority was not as open to challenge. Exceptions of course would include those women who had ventured out of the private sphere into the public/political sphere as spies and soldiers. Memoirs of the Civil War far outnumber those of the Revolution, and a remarkable number of female spies, cross-dressing soldiers, and camp followers published their memoirs, sometimes, as in the cases of Emma Edmonds’s and Belle Boyd’s memoirs, enjoying multiple printings. Yet those “true life” narratives seem to have been treated as a different case and the authority of those women did not “trickle down” to female fiction writers. Even currently, very few women write spy fiction, even though opportunities in the public and political spheres, including the armed services and the various intelligence agencies, have expanded exponentially in the last few decades. Critical discussions of spy novels (of which there is a surprising amount) generally mention only Helen MacInnes if they mention any women at all, which they do only rarely.

Although women did not write many spy stories, female spies begin to appear later in the century with more regularity. Of course while most spy stories, even the very masculine *André*, have some female characters, early spy fiction rarely proves the best source for well-rounded female characters. In James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Spy*, John Pendleton Kennedy’s *Horse Shoe Robinson*, and William Gilmore Simms’s *The Partisan*, the heroines serve as rewards for the heroes after they accomplish their feats of patriotism. Simms gives Katherine Walton slightly more prominence in the last book of the Revolutionary trilogy begun with *The Partisan*, *Katherine Walton* (1854), but like her literary sisters, Frances Wharton and Mildred Lindsey, she exists as proof of the hero’s dedication to family values, and as the perfect mate, spirited yet discreet, to match his heroism. While heroines of these early novels tended to fit a standard type of high-born, surpassingly beautiful patriot, authors did allow greater freedom to their minor female characters. Cooper’s Betty Flanagan, the camp follower cook, and Katy Haynes, Birch’s housekeeper, freed

from the conventions of polite feminine society, drink and cavort with soldiers (particularly Betty), and speak their opinions, ill-formed though they may be. Occasionally, minor women could act as messengers, or, more rarely, as spies.

The Madwoman as a Spy

The number of women who spy in fiction does not begin to approach the numbers who probably did so during the war. One wonders why, when women often populate the military camps of the novels and historic accounts mention female spies and scouts. While she overstates her case, Christine Bold is justified in concluding that women, “[s]tanding for home, hearth and domestic legitimacy” are “barred from the professional orbit of the spy” (23). Some women venture into the public realm as spies, or spy helpers, like Marion Day of *The Rebel Spy*, but their excursions into the professional realm are generally quite limited. Spying for the Americans, identified after *The Spy* as a military occupation necessitating great bravery and understanding of military strategy, was an occupation not seen as a compatible match for women’s expertise or disposition. As the novels after Cooper’s overtly identified the spy as a military hero, women, excluded from military action, became more removed from the espionage action.

The antebellum literary hesitance to depict women as spies flies in the face of historical evidence to the contrary. Women and African Americans, more than white men, were often in excellent positions to act as spies. As sutlers and camp followers, they were often allowed free run of the camp, and as nearly invisible beings (as demonstrated in Cooper’s novel, although Cooper trusts only Harvey, disguised as one of the invisible beings, to have the intelligence to pull off an espionage mission), they generally escaped notice while soldiers openly discussed secret information. As the British spy master, Major John André relied heavily on his agent Ann Bates who routinely infiltrated the American camps dressed as a peddler. Women located in New York and other metropolitan areas also were well-placed to gather information and pass it on without suspicion. Although female spying is better documented during the Civil War, the similar “civil war” nature of the Revolution and the even greater disregard for operational security (remember, Nathan Hale’s mission is well known primarily because he revealed it to several people before he left, and the spread of

such knowledge may have contributed to his being captured) during the earlier war when combined with the documented cases of female spying suggest that a significant percentage of spies operating during the war were women.

When women act as spies in the earlier works, they are often lower class, and border on insanity. Often, they are labeled as witches, possibly telling fortunes and living on the edge of society in ramshackle huts. In Eliza Cushing's *Yorktown* (1826), Maude Mansel, at best mentally unstable, exists as a weird witch-like figure living on the edge of the Leslie's estate. Seduced, blackmailed into assisting in murder, and stripped of her former money and prestige, Maude commits acts that only a woman who had lost her reason would commit. Her devotion to her son Rupert is the only logic behind her actions, and once he dies, she takes her life. She dresses as a soldier in order to remain near Rupert in the American camp, and she spies on the British in order to determine what plans the British Colonels Walstein and Clifford have for her son's beloved. Although Rupert's patriotism inspires his mother to commit acts of great bravery, her maternal interests also lead her to tell devastating lies, such as intimation of incest between Helen (who has rejected Rupert) and the hero St. Olmar. Although she demonstrates a selfless bravery, her maternal desires for her son prevent her from providing disinterested information.

The Widow Margaret Darby of Woodworth's play *The Widow's Son* (1825) also demonstrates the insanity principle well. The widow has had a hard enough life to justify mental instability. Her elder son, William, after being unjustly persecuted by overzealous patriots and forced into service as a sergeant, betrays the American position at Fort Montgomery to the British and enlists as a British soldier. By the time of the play, he has risen to the rank of captain, although he is tainted with the doubt that accompanies treason. Her second son, Jack, a lazy profligate who has spent the past few years impersonating a variety of professions, including shoemaker, peddler, and singing master, has lately reappeared as a doctor who can best be described as a quack of the rankest kind. The loss of her property, her family, and her family's good name impacted her sanity, as Woodworth explains, in the preface to the play,

Former misfortune had apparently bewildered her brain, and embittered the genial fluids of her heart: but this last, this "unkindest cut of all" [the betrayal by her son William], well nigh

drove her mad. Her uncommon strength of mind, however, uniting with a vigorous healthful constitution, resisted the attack of insanity; and though spirit of gloomy misanthropy seemed to take possession of her soul, her reasoning faculties remained unimpaired. (vi)

With nothing left, she gives her life to supporting the American cause as a spy. Posing as a fortune teller, she learns military secrets from the soldiers and, more often, the women attached to the British army who come to her to learn their future. Even most of the Americans believe she is just Crazy Peg, until they recognize that the information she delivers is accurate and highly valuable, so much so that at one point, the American command debate the effect the action they plan to take against Captain William Darby will have on Margaret; Trueman notes, "If Darby suffers, Margaret is lost. She is an invaluable agent, because suspicion could never light on such an object" (68). Although she is a dedicated American patriot, she is an unreliable one where her son is concerned, because her mother's instinct of protection trumps her loyalty to the American cause. She faces several conflicts in conscience when her eldest son comes into contact with American troops in an attempt to free André. As in so many other fictional spy stories, André and Arnold lie at the heart of the plot. Captain Darby is wanted by the Americans in part because of his apparent similarity to Arnold (the difference in rank and potential difference in effect is not addressed: Darby and Arnold are considered equivalent in the eyes of the Americans). As with many other spy stories, Margaret does not appear to deliver information of great importance, although she is said to be invaluable in helping Sergeant Champe execute his plan to kidnap Arnold, the primary action of the play. As in many other spy stories, Woodworth claims to base the play on a true story and provides the story as a preface to the play for a reading audience; yet as Stephen Graff notes, the actual spy does not apparently occupy the pages of history (103).

Woodworth's treatment of Margaret as a character illustrates many of the hesitations regarding women as spies. Like so many, Woodworth appears to consider woman's "essential nature" in potential conflict with pure patriotism. When her sons are not present, Margaret is as true a patriot as anyone could desire. When they are present, her instincts toward nurturing potentially harm the Americans chances. She shoots at an American officer, Major Carnes, about to capture Captain Darby, for example. Although she

shoots to wound, not to kill, and claims that by stopping Carnes in his attempt to seize Darby she has actually prevented a larger British attack and thus saved his life (77), the conflict of loyalties makes her a particularly problematical spy. She claims that her son's eventual death at the hands of his nemesis, the British Major Melville, a man who questioned his loyalty to the British cause since his defection, redeems the family honor and settles her concerns about the Americans' desire to capture and hang her son, yet she retires from service as a spy after William's death. Although the characters praise Margaret profusely, the play raises questions about the reliability of women as spies because both their less-than-robust sanity and their "natural" loyalties cause potential conflicts of interest. Margaret as a spy is not considered compelling enough to carry the entire play: the hero of the play is the male spy, Sergeant Major Champe.

In *The Female Spy; or the Child of the Brigade* (1846), Benjamin Barker creates another crazy female spy twenty-one years later and eliminates many of the conflicts that plague the Widow Darby. Mary Ellenwood is introduced in the beginning of the novel as a woman who is driven to distraction by the death of her husband in the Boston Massacre (that Barker represents the overwhelmingly working class victims, and replaces the first victim, African American Crispus Attucks, with a bourgeois, white merchant demonstrates the erasure of racial and class difference in male-authored spy stories, even when describing Americans). She resurfaces as the apparently deranged, but mad "north-by-northwest" (to borrow from *Hamlet*), Crazy Mary who is in reality the Female Spy (always capitalized as if an honorary title). Mary apparently knows a hawk from a handsaw by the time we meet her, but the supposition that she did indeed wander distracted in the intervening years between the Massacre and the start of the Revolution lingers since Barker never explains where she was during that time. On the other hand, Barker is so imprecise with his dates (for example, he introduces Mary's adopted son, the twelve year old Charles, left as an infant foundling, and the thirty year-old Mary, who had been married ten years before and tried for three years to have children until Charles appeared, suggesting that either Charles was an infant at five years-old, or Mary and her husband had been married for fifteen years and that Mary gave up all chances of fertility at the age of eighteen), it could be that he simply forgot that the Revolution did not begin until five years after the Massacre (although he does have Charles age seven years in those five and ahistorically has the American

army begin training two years before Bunker's Hill).⁷² Mary's adopted son Charles is heroic (becoming a brigadier general by the end of the novel), but he meets his real mother, thus severing his tie to Mary, and is discovered to be the heir of a dukedom. Mary is herself denied heroine status. Widowed, barren and denied even her foster family, she is doomed to exist as a marginal character, regardless of the actual strength of her mental health and her service to the nation, and essentially disappears at the end as Charles is rewarded with property, prestige and marriage to the conventional heroine, Clara.

All three texts illustrate not only the hesitancy of assigning a heroine the still ignominious role of a spy, but also the readiness to assume that women tend toward insanity, so much so that insanity, more than any other costume, becomes the disguise of choice for the female spy. The choice of insanity as the only disguise necessary demonstrates women's innate invisibility to the male subjects of their observation. Kathleen De Grave, in her analysis of the memoirs of the real, female Civil War spies Belle Boyd, Sarah Emma Edmonds and others, notes that each spy used some version of a disguise of "invisibility" that generally capitalized on her invisibility as a woman among men discussing military business. For some this meant assuming the role of coquette (Belle Boyd's most common role), for others the role of servants (Edmonds dressed as both an Irish female peddler and a black servant), but all depended on the assumption that they were incapable of understanding that which was overheard (138-141), a rule that held true in fiction as well. When Major Lee and Sergeant Champe suspect they are being overheard, they are relieved that it is only "Crazy Peg" (21). Women, especially women considered insane, could be (and often were) dismissed as potential spies. That the insanity is not without basis also throws into question the women's agency in assuming the role of madwoman. The commonness of literary female "insane" spies is particularly striking since proportionally fewer male spies assume mental disguises, and those more often disguise intellectual acuity (they are more apt to pretend to be the village idiot) than mental health as in the case of David Doolittle in Benjamin Barker's *Ellen Grafton* (1845) and Ned Buntline's *Saul Sabberday; or The Idiot Spy* (1858). Certainly, as Elaine Showalter documents in *The Female Malady*, the period during which these novels were written marked an increasingly common depiction of insanity as a female disease and an increase in the number of women institutionalized. Although Showalter's work addresses England

specifically, the same trends are captured in American fiction of the period. Even when they are not spies, raving women float through these novels. *Morton's* Caroline Anson becomes a "lovely maniac" (220) after her groom is shot during the wedding ceremony. Catherine Montour of *Mary Derwent*, the mysterious white woman married to the Indian chief, has moved to live with the Indians in order to escape the madness that caused her to dash her toddler daughter from the window. Although heroes could be spies, as the genre quickly evolved from the restricted view of the male spy in *The Spy* to depict successful male heroic spies within a few years, female spies could not be considered unqualified heroines until the 1850s.

Although both Woodworth and Barker present a fairly straightforward depiction of a woman feigning madness, at least to some degree, Cushing's portrayal of Maude contains something of the "madwoman in the attic," to use Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's phrase. Linda Kerber notes that Maude is Cushing's most original character, and is a character type who would not be repeated for quite some time (272-3). Although a villain, she epitomizes the true hearted patriot who proves brave in the face of mortal danger and steps forward to provide military leadership. Marginal as she is, she can push beyond accepted gender norms without damaging the heroine's place as a suitably feminine heroine or casting too much aspersion on her author for authorizing the "radical" position of allowing women in combat (a position some think fairly "radical" today). Unlike her seducer Walstein, Maude retains a certain compelling integrity as a character despite her author's ambivalence toward her. In the end, she is partially redeemed by her service to her country, while Walstein is thoroughly damned. She does, however, illustrate the consequences, both fiduciary and mental, of breaking from society. Her suicide at the end of the novel seems less the act of a woman without hope than the firm resolution of a woman to close the story just told; yet it is also the only end possible.

Catharine Sedgwick's *The Linwoods* provides something of an exception to the general rule of female spies plagued by questionable mental stability; yet her female spy, Lizzy Bengin is clearly not the heroine. Unlike her literary sisters in espionage, Lizzy does not skulk about gathering information by acting the role of "crazy woman." In fact, she wears no disguise other than motherly shop owner, which is her primary occupation. Bengin, a secondary character, runs the market/safe house for Eliot Lee and any other

American spies in New York City, appearing to be a solidly middle-class institution in New York running what appears to be a respectable dry goods store rather than experimenting with the occult as a fortune teller or existing mysteriously on the edge of civilization. (Sedgwick does have a fortune teller at the beginning of the novel, but the fortune teller only injects an element of foreboding; she does not reappear when the Revolution breaks out.) Like a respectable patriot, she is awarded a pension at the end of the novel. Still, she could be read as a more moderate view of a woman who, taken to extremes, might be described as a witch. Described as “fair, fat and forty” (212) and often talking to herself or her sole companion, a raucous parrot named Sylvy, Dame Bengin reveals some deviations from the feminine norms of heroines. Her father, having only a daughter, “repaired, as far as possible, what he considered the calamity of her sex, by giving her the habits of a boy” (246). Although talking to oneself does not constitute mental illness, nor does talking to a pet signify imagining that pet is a medium, Dame Bengin contrasts sharply with the mentally sound heroine, beautiful, young and eminently marriable Isabella. Lizzy, as but one of a wide range of female characters which includes female villains, shrinking violets, socially preoccupied matrons, spunky heroines and others, does not stand out as an aberration to other female characters. Sedgwick resists flattening her female spy character into a mysterious, witch-like and possibly mentally unstable character; yet she introduces the common questions about a female spy’s compliance with gender norms, and denies the possibility that a female spy could be a heroine.

While insanity often functions as a disguise, it also seems a foregone conclusion that women who spy must be crazy. This was even more true for real spies than fictional ones as observers realized that many of the presumptions of the self-imposed prohibitions of “ladies” from active participation in the public sphere and the impossibility of women’s committing full-fledged “treason” were false, and that women were as capable of inflicting substantial damage to an army or government through espionage as men. Elizabeth Van Lew, a Union sympathizer and active spy living in Richmond, was dismissed by her neighbors as “Crazy Bet” even as they carefully watched her for espionage activities. Although she did not publish her diary, largely because of a justifiable fear of retribution, Van Lew appeared in Southern papers for a long time after

the war as the “Yankee Spy” with rhetoric which calls to mind fictional representations of female spies as well as the evil hags of fairy tales:

A portrait of Miss Van Lew, painted in youth, represents her as lovely in appearance. To the younger generation, however, [the older Miss Van Lew], with sharpened features, white curls hanging unconfined about her shoulders and a twisted figure, ... seemed a witch of a woman—a strange, uncanny creature, muttering and talking to herself as she walked the streets. She encouraged little girls in the neighborhood to come into the grounds by gifts of fruit and flowers. (qtd Van Lew 111)

Not only does the description cast her as a witch, it also demonstrates the common anxiety about the sexuality of a woman who would “unsex” herself by actively participating in wartime activities, particularly for the other side. The luring of little girls not only evokes the cannibalism of the wicked witch of “Hansel and Gretel,” but it also suggests pederast lesbianism⁷³ (the article notes that she discouraged similar visits from little boys). Since Van Lew continued to live among the people she betrayed, the rhetoric is considerably more heated than it might have been had she retired to the North after the war. Indeed, she is treated far more harshly than Benedict Arnold, America’s most notorious traitor, even as late as 1908 when this article was published. Although many writers accused Arnold of unnatural appetites, mental instability, and an altered physiognomy to reflect his “blackened soul,” none accused him of breaking any sexual taboo stronger than adultery and seduction. The extreme reaction to Van Lew’s transgression of “ladylike decorum,” not to mention her defiance against the predominant political position, could explain why few writers could imagine female spies, and when they did, they were depicted as not of sound mind, even when spying for the Americans.

The Melodramatic Heroine as Spy

Much of the male reticence to depict women as capable of the cleverness and deception involved in being a spy without a concurrent reduction of their attractiveness as heroines began to erode coincident with the strengthening suffrage movement and the continuing approval of the spy’s image. Emerson Bennett’s

The Female Spy; or Treason in the Camp (1852) was the first novel to feature a female spy as a major character who was not crazy, deformed, or otherwise unqualified for heroine status. She is, however, French, and thus given greater license than an American heroine might be. Rosalie again starred in a sequel (really a concluding volume), *Rosalie Du Pont*, the next year. Rosalie Du Pont (an assumed name, her real name remains a mystery until the end of the second novel) is a French noble woman who masquerades as a wealthy commoner in the home of her American aunt and the aunt's Tory husband. As a result of her Tory relatives, Rosalie gains access to the British military society of New York and enjoys the attentions of various British officers, including none other than Major André. Unbeknownst to her British courtiers, she harbors feelings for an American officer, Edgar Milford, as well as the American cause. We learn that she gathers information from her British admirers, and passes it on to General Washington. Despite the title, however, the first novel is really an André/Arnold tale. Rosalie does have many adventures, and routinely masquerades as a young male mulatto servant, thus crossing race, gender and class boundaries with a single costume, demonstrating the invisibility of both women and African Americans as no one recognizes her in the disguise which consists of male servant's clothes and a fake tan, even though, unlike Elvira of *Morton*, she speaks quite often. She delivers actual intelligence, but the first novel centers on the unfolding of Arnold's treason and André's capture. By the second novel, Rosalie takes a more active role, since André's story has played out in the opening chapter when we learn that André had been hanged. *Rosalie Du Pont* also focuses on the historical spy drama of Sergeant Champe, adding Captain Milford as another would-be "deserter" with assistance from Rosalie and her colorful spy network which includes her mulatto cross-dressing servant Mune, an Italian mesmerist, and a female fortune teller as conspirators. Rosalie's adventures point to some of the limits of fiction that depicts well-known historical events as its main plot in that, despite some suggestions that the characters in small ways influenced the course of events of the tale, they cannot alter the historical outcome of Arnold escaping from the attempted kidnapping, and Champe's transfer as a British soldier.

In addition, the novels demonstrate the still limited role of female spies in fiction. Rosalie, despite being courageous, clever and daring, as well as beautiful and wealthy (thus the ideal heroine), is still a

woman, and limited in conventionally “feminine” ways. Although her feminine charms offer chances to attempt to persuade Sir Henry Clinton to save her boyfriend captured as a spy (as Sedgwick’s heroine Isabella pleads for her brother in *The Linwoods*), those charms accompany sexual dependence which limits her ability to fend for herself. After a particularly exciting night in *The Female Spy*, she takes ill with the same raging fever that appears to afflict heroines far more often than heroes. Despite her daring, she falls prey to unscrupulous ruffians, who bang her on the head in the first novel, and abduct her and threaten rape in the second. This second incident provides the requisite rescue of the damsel in distress as her American officer boyfriend saves her from the brutes. None of these limitations are new, and in many cases, Rosalie has fewer constraints than her older literary sisters. Captain Molly, for example, despite being a brave woman, spends much of the novel sick or fainting, often looking more radiantly beautiful for having been deathly ill. (In an age during which women altered the placement of internal organs with corsets, took belladonna to brighten their eyes, and avoided exercise, one can only assume that Poe’s poetical standard of a beautiful dead woman was also a beauty standard for living women.) Rosalie’s limitations are enough to establish her as a weaker, more dependent character than Captain Milford, yet Rosalie demonstrates intelligence and manages to outwit her intrepid boyfriend while in the mulatto disguise, suggesting that their union will be one of greater parity than many such literary matches. Still, she exists as a male fantasy of the perfect woman: beautiful, wealthy, clever, and exotic who, despite her own riches and talents, would willingly “fly with [Edgar Milford] even to the end of the earth” (138). She dismisses Captain Milford’s dismay that he did not recognize his lover in disguise, despite repeated contact, by reassuring him that few other people could penetrate her disguise. Although one might question how well Edgar really knows her if he could not see behind some skin stain, and hence how suitable a match he might be, Rosalie sacrifices her agency and identity when she willingly becomes the “tender flower” Edgar will “guard and cherish.”

The novel is, as were most spy novels by this point, formulaic and melodramatic. Melodrama was the popular entertainment on stage, replacing the paternalistic theatre popular during the first third of the century (McConachie 1), and in the pages of books, it was no different. The paternalistic concerns of Cooper regarding the appropriate form for the new government had begun to erode into a republican patriotism, just

as the anguish of George Washington in *André* over the burdens of leadership had been replaced by the patriotic celebration of “the yeomanry” in *The Glory of Columbia*. Since the novel reflected melodramatic conventions, the hero must be matched with a heroine worthy of the hero, and she must appear often enough to be considered a heroine, in contrast with a female character like Dunlap’s Honoria of *André* who appears only long enough to add to the poignancy of André’s impending death without becoming a more than a symbol of tragic love. As spy novels evolved into formulaic melodrama, the novels tend to end in the impending marriage of the spy, so the spy’s love interest often plays a large role. David Grimsted characterizes the classic melodramatic heroine as “always a fair woman, though this ‘was the least of her attractions,’ an outward sign of an even greater beauty. ‘Soul, sense, sentiment, sensibility and a noble mind’ all rendered her ‘an object too dazzling bright for men to look upon with aught but mental adoration’” (173). However, in spy stories especially, this perfection was frequently united with a spirited patriotism, but her expression of patriotic ideals, whether spying or thwarting the British and Tories, generally lasted only as long as the war, or until the heroine married the hero, whichever came first. While many titular heroines, like *Agnes Courtenay*, primarily exist as a reason for the would-be lover to be captured under pretense, in other male-authored melodramas, the female love interest proves nearly as capable a spy or “freedom fighter” as her undercover lover. The title character of *Ellen Grafton, The Lily of Lexington; or the Bride of Liberty* is a plucky woman with enough gumption to shoot a British soldier, but one who will willingly “dwindle into a wife” for the right American.

A classic example is *The Rebel Spy* (1852) whose title could apply to any of three characters: Sherwood Melville, the male American officer hero; Marion Day, his later girlfriend; or Doctor Montague, a mysterious British doctor who is sympathetic enough to the American cause to betray British secrets. Melville is most often referred to as “the rebel spy,” but he figures as a standard, ineffective “captive spy” whose mission and capture remain mysterious, although his captivity and the anguish it causes his American compatriots bemoaning the probable fate of the “fine looking and brave fellow” (29) does occupy several pages. On the other hand, Marion proves a more effective espionage agent as she delivers to the Americans a message dropped by her unwanted British suitor, the villainous Captain Grayson, and arranges Melville’s

escape as well as protecting the innocent Alice Melville from the clutches of the villainous British officer, Colonel Marton. Marion strains belief, however, in her unsullied perfection. She is so beautiful that the mere description that "her face was loveliness itself" identifies her to Grayson (apparently no one else approaches her perfect beauty), and even the hard-hearted British officer praises her as "Beautiful as an angel" and possessing "a finely balanced mind, well stored with knowledge, and overflowing with graceful and sparkling thought" (23). Marion recognizes her own limitations "as a feeble woman" but her "love of country" justifies her taking action which might "under other circumstances ... seem unmaidenly" (15). One of these actions is dressing as a boy to see her brother, Edward, but, when she faints at the false report that Edward is dead, her sex is revealed by the "long, silken ringlets" and the "swelling outlines of the bosom" (52). While Melville leads on the battlefield, and Marion protects the far more limited Alice, Doctor Montague seems to act as the classic mole: a man who has access to the highest ranks of the British command, yet, because of his love of liberty and sympathy to the American cause, drops hints of impending British action. One gets the vague impression that he delivers much more important reports to high in the American command, yet, like so many other effective spies in these novels, the quality of his intelligence displayed is on the order of warning Alice Melville of Colonel Marton's evil intentions. He functions as a Harvey Birch-like character, yet of a higher social class. He is, however, as resolutely shut off from heroic status as Harvey.

This novel provides a fine example of the classically melodramatic spy novel that dominated the cheap spy novel genre. In some ways, as the novels become more melodramatic, they tend to adopt conventions that had been present only in female-authored novels: women rescuing their male captives and greater focus on the British threat to American womanhood. I would hesitate to claim, as Ann Douglas might, that this suggests the "feminization of American culture" or spy literature, although the melodramatization of the Revolution and the work of spies does rely on the same disregard for history and moral platitudes that she deplores.⁷⁴ Although clearly different from the mainly male world of the earlier patriarchal spy literature of Cooper and Dunlap, these melodramas are republican male fantasies. While more women appear more often, the women are not the round characters of female-authored spy novels who

grow in their increasing patriotism or recognition of commonality between American and British women (depending on the plot). These heroines are utterly static creatures who seem far more perfect than their heroic boyfriends. Certainly Sherwood Melville is “a fine looking and brave fellow” but he is not an “angel on earth.” Marion never experiences any growth in her patriotism—she confronts her father’s Toryism from the beginning—and she is as perfect in the beginning as at the end, even to the point of recognizing her innate feebleness. Likewise, even the plucky Rosalie du Pont is a static character who seems a better “catch” than Captain Milford, a likeable fellow and reasonably brave one, deserves. Few of the novels in this study could be described as paradigms for character development, but contrasted with Catharine Sedgwick’s Isabella Linwood, who gradually comes to acknowledge the superiority of the American cause, or *Morton*’s Virginia Morton who develops a strength of character to survive the kidnapping of her son, or even Elvira who learns to transform her selfish love for James Morton into selfless sacrifice and acceptance of James’s love for Virginia, these melodramatic heroines are as lifelike and as suitable as models for real women as Barbie dolls. The men, in contrast, do not suffer under the burden of being “manliness itself.” They are good men, brave, yet not superhumanly so, defined more by their lack of destructive cowardice or avarice than a superfluity of any quality in particular. They are also fallible, often falling to the enemy when in the “attitude of a spy.” Although having the hero rescued by the heroine may seem to represent an increasing valuation of women, one should remember that prior to these melodramas, the hero was often saved by his faithful manservant. The replacement of women for underclass servants suggests less a rise in status for women than a greater imagined egalitarianism among men. Even the greater flirtation with cross-dressing women, as in the cases of Rosalie, Marion and, to some extent, the gun-toting Ellen Grafton, indicates less ease with disrupting gender division than proof that women do not resemble men enough to usurp their position. Although Rosalie apparently succeeds in her impersonation, she impersonates her female mulatto servant who impersonates a boy, three degrees of separation removed from a grown white man. The paternalism of male-dominated dramas like *André* and *The Spy* began to give way to a world view which recognizes women as an integral component of men’s lives and the overlapping private and public spheres in men’s lives. Men, having families and public positions of work, can be seen to occupy both spheres

comfortably. Women play a larger part than in earlier male visions of the spy story, yet they still remain outside the primary action, entering the public sphere mainly to preserve their interests in the private sphere.

William Gilmore Simms, concluding his Revolutionary series in 1854 with *Katherine Walton*, also relaxed some of the paternalist attitudes evident in *The Partisan* (1835). Although Katherine remains the proudly patriotic and haughty girlfriend of Major (now Colonel) Singleton as in *The Partisan* she is no longer shoved to the sidelines on her father's country estate, but enters the social action of the novel which, since the war has entered in its final stages, is the center of the story. Another character, Ella Monckton, however, demonstrates greater female agency as she acts as informant for Major Procter, warning him of a plot within his unit to have him tried on trumped up charges of treason. Of course, Ella's intelligence belongs to the realm of personal disagreements played out in public court, and Colonel Singleton, acting as a mole by impersonating Captain Furness, remains the military primary spy of the novel. Still, Simms's emphasis on the world of courtship between officers and ladies and the recognition of the political consequences of a lady's tea table suggests that by the 1850s, even the most masculinist authors had begun to recognize the impact of women on male actions, or at least the market wisdom of appealing to a female audience, while keeping women outside the sphere of direct national influence.

Even the play, *Love in '76* (1857), though it demonstrates Rose Elsworth's cleverness in hiding Captain Walter Armstrong, her American spy boyfriend, from the British officers invited by her father, keeps the heroine outside the primary action of the spy drama since it depicts only her talent in hiding her boyfriend within the domestic realm when the political sphere, in the form of British soldiers, threatens to intrude. Walter, an American spy, has come to the Elsworth home to request that, despite his politics, he be granted the continued privilege of courting Rose. Although both Mr. Elsworth and his son, Harry, a Tory officer, deny his request, he has not left the house when Harry's commander, Major Cleveland, and members of the officer cadre come to visit. When Armstrong appears and they recognize him as the spy they are pursuing, Rose spends the remainder of the play scheming to extricate him and fending off the suit of one of the officers without revealing her betrothal to Armstrong. By impersonating her Irish serving girl (who never appears on stage, reinforcing the invisibility of immigrant servants), she manages to marry her intended

under the noses of the British officers, and smear egg on their faces at the same time. A light-hearted spy stories, the play combines parlor comedy with spy play and patriotic drama, employing the convention of the clever woman who demonstrates the power of her wit to foil the villain and protect her man. It also demonstrates the foolishness of the public sphere's chivalric code of honor within the domestic realm of "polite society" where a certain amount of deception is presumed necessary in the idle chitchat of ladies and the men who court them.

The play also demonstrates the full acceptance of the spy as a heroic character from his first appearance in the beginning of the century. Not only is Armstrong a fully heroic character, he is a comic one, cast from the same mold as Royall Tyler's Colonel Manly of *The Contrast* (1787). Although most spy stories up to this point are somber stories of suspense, national security, and the future of the nation, this play treats spying as merely another circumstance for potential comic confusion. Armstrong's righteous code of honor which causes him to leave his secure hiding place is sent up as a foolish adherence to a public code which jeopardizes all involved threatening the immediate world of the domestic realm. (One does wonder how effective a spy Armstrong could be if he insists on presenting himself to men sent to capture him.) The spy plot, complete with disguise, capture, and women with signet rings who charm British officers into releasing their captives, when transferred to the domestic realm becomes a matter of comedy with no political import. Rose marries an American officer, while her sister, Kate, marries Rose's spurned British suitor, yet no political rancor erupts nor are any conclusions regarding the political state of the new nation drawn. The play concludes only "What difference can we affix/ 'Twixt love today and Love in '76" (234). Rose, while witty and patriotic, draws from the late Restoration model of the witty woman, like Millamant of *The Way of the World*, rather than demonstrating a new type. She gains primacy as the central character of the play because of the domestic setting of the spy drama, not because she represents a new female type.

Things would change somewhat during the Civil War, as women become a more visible force in the political sphere and Southern women in particular demonstrated that they could participate in partisan politics in unladylike ways, such as spitting at and insulting General Butler's Union soldiers during the occupation of New Orleans, and more women engage more visibly in espionage and publish their accounts of

their exploits during the war. As Mary P. Ryan notes, "The Civil War on the Southern front brought women into the symbolic center of the public sphere. But while the occupation of New Orleans turned gender symbolism topsy-turvy, it did not dislodge patriarchy....[Women] did not break the masculine monopoly on the formal public sphere" (146). Although masculine images of war and espionage would continue to dominate the fictional spy narrative, women's increasingly visible activity in the public sphere would allow men to imagine women as potentially dangerous spies who use their "feminine charms" to disarm their opponents. Belle Boyd was the most visible and notorious female spy whose memoir, *In Camp and Prison* (1865), was hugely popular. (Its initial proceeds, \$2000 in gold sewn into the hem of her dress, caused Boyd to sink in a boating accident.) More than any other woman, Boyd impacted future depictions of women spies by her self-depiction as a spunky Southern belle who literally charmed Yankees into the arms of their Confederate captors (85) and was coolly capable of shooting Union soldiers who threatened her. Her exploits were chronicled throughout papers in the North which tended to exaggerate the power of a seventeen year-old-girl to stymie the Union army.

Perhaps unintentionally, Boyd became the model for the sexpot female spy, and the model for the spunky belle to be subdued, as in Dion Boucicault's *Belle Lamar* (1874), the first of the mainstream Civil War spy dramas which would depict the South as a woman to be won by a Northern soldier, most often a spy. A spate of other Civil War plays followed which used the same basic plot, including Bronson Howard's *Shenandoah* (1889), William Gillette's *Secret Service* (1890), and David Belasco's *The Heart of Maryland* (1895). *Belle Lamar*, in particular, depicts the powers of the beautiful female spy, Belle, and the greater power of a "true man" to subdue and convert her into a loyal woman who recognizes that her place is in the home, not on the battlefield. Like Boyd, Belle uses sex appeal as a weapon of espionage, although with greater deception than Boyd credits herself. Belle has charmed the Union officer, Captain Marston Pike, into granting her extensive favors, particularly passes to cross the Union lines which, without his knowledge, she uses to transport the Confederate spy, Major Stuart. Pike gives her these passes because she has promised to marry him, even though he knows that her heart favors the South. What he does not know is that her heart so favors the South that she had left her Union officer husband, Colonel Phillip Bligh, and obtained a divorce

from him, whom, we learn later, she never stopped loving. In the coincidences that can only occur in melodrama, Bligh is Marston's commanding officer. Belle and Stuart are captured, and, during the course of the discussion of how their use of a pass came about, both Marston and Bligh relate their connection to Belle. Bligh, before he knows that Belle has been captured, discloses his views on female spies: "When the serpent coils to take its spring, do we regard its sex ere we set a heel upon its venomous fangs? By these Dalilahs [*sic*] our Samson of the North is shorn of half his might" (9). Bligh steadfastly refuses to announce his relation to Belle during the court martial, but Marston, accused of treason, tells the relationship. Out of deference to the colonel, the court martial refuses to find Belle guilty. Through many conflicts of conscience by both Belle and Bligh, escape attempts, and Confederate attacks, they recognize their strong mutual love, and she renounces her secessionist politics to join her Union husband. Belle announces her plans to retire from her Secret Service to General "Stonewall" Jackson, concluding, "[A] woman's country is her husband's home; her cause his happiness. Her only place is by his side, and death alone should part them" (36). Boucicault demonstrates greater sympathy for the South than many of the later playwrights, and thus retains more of Belle's spunk, but in the end, both the Union and the man prevail.

Boyd also provided the basis for the "dangerous woman" who first appears with sinister force in Charles Wesley Alexander's *The Picket Slayer* (1863). Mary Murdock is a beautiful woman with "the face and form of an angel and the soul of a demon" (39) and a mysterious power (which includes some skill at mesmerism) whose twisted imagination has caused her to support the Confederate cause. Although she causes the men she meets to be immediately enamored of her, she is so evil that even Jefferson Davis fears her as he warns his men that she is "one of the most terrible beings of which you can conceive" (40). In one example of her power and her unthinkable, and unladylike, lack of scruples, while escorting two intelligence agents to Union lines, she calmly blows away six Union pickets while waiting for her contacts to reappear. By herself she breaks the Union line around the White House, bringing the nation dangerously close to losing the president. In the end, she dies in a supernatural battle with her guardian, Mr. Wetherhill, a mysterious British magician who supports the American cause (he too dies in the conflict; thus the world is safe from these two magicians and dabblers in the occult). Alexander, writing under the name "Wesley

Bradshaw" wrote a series of short novels about female spies—most often those serving for the Union. Unlike their melodramatic antebellum predecessors, Alexander's spies extended the exoticism of Rosalie du Pont to fantastic extremes. Pauline D'Estraye, the heroine of two of these novels, *Pauline of the Potomac* (1862) and *Maud of the Mississippi* (1863) (she changes her name inexplicably), seems to be modeled after Rosalie (she too is a French noblewoman), but Alexander greatly enhances her exoticism by foregrounding her Catholicism along with her escape from the excesses of the French Committee of Public Safety (the historical time lines seem to have been considered of secondary or importance), and like his other female spies, she possesses strange magical powers. Although she comes very close to marriage at the end of the first novel, Alexander denies her any possibility of a conventional life, although he teases his readers with providing her not one but two suitors. Another of Alexander's female spies, Wenonah, *General Sherman's Indian Spy* (1865), was even more exotic and possessed the same mesmeric powers.

Although most of his female spy characters supported the Union, all contributed to the "dangerous woman" type who possessed personal charms so powerful that she was nearly supernatural. Sexualized and exotic, she threatened the very nation she protected. Of course, the purest example of the dangerous woman was Mary Murdock who anticipated later deadly women who attack the American way of life and provide seductive temptations for the hero. Dangerous women are more dangerous than any other type of villain because they unite the most misogynist fears about women: their animal fierceness in avenging the murder of family members, natural skill at deception, sexual power over men, and powers of intuition beyond masculine comprehension. These fears surfaced more often as women gained political power, and their appearance in Alexander's novels after the push for female suffrage in the 1850s and 60s demonstrates Susan Faludi's theory of "backlash"⁷⁵ as well as the conservative uses of the spy novel.

Prior to the war, when the cult of domesticity held sway and bourgeois women were assumed paragons of virtue, antebellum men did not generally associate women from the elite classes with "dangerous women" spies. For example, well-to-do Peggy Shippen Arnold, the daughter of a wealthy Philadelphia family and likely highly involved in the most potentially dangerous covert operation during the Revolution, escaped criticism from all the male authors who presumed she was less a player in the Arnold/André drama

than a victim.⁷⁶ Such a conclusion required not only ignoring Peggy's father's Tory sympathies, and her friendship with André and other members of Clinton's staff, but also presuming that she could not exert any influence over her husband, good or bad, and that Arnold would keep his wife ignorant of such a dramatic decision. Peggy's reported fit after Arnold's escape, reported by Thatcher and others (220), was not supposed to be a piece of clever acting, although Aaron Burr, for one, presumed she knew of her husband's plans (Abbatt 44). Despite the obvious parallels, which did not require nearly the fictionalization authors employed in depicting other aspects of the story, she does not figure as Lady Macbeth but remains "as innocent as an angel and incapable of doing wrong" as her husband proclaimed her in a letter to Washington after his escape (Abbatt 43). Given women's lack of political power at the time, and the predisposition to presume well-born women adhered to the social constraints and mirrored, rather than influenced, their husband's political preferences, Peggy Shippen Arnold and her fictional cousins rarely figured as "dangerous female spies" until the Civil War's historical evidence, and women's (slowly) increasing political power demonstrated that they could act as players in the political sphere.

As women gain more political power, male authors more often create dramatically dangerous women by playing on male fears about women, figuring women, like creatures from Venus, as an entirely different species from men. Robert Ludlum's woman terrorist Amaya Bajaratt in *The Scorpio Illusion* (1993), who confounds intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies throughout the western world as a one woman terrorist agency for hire, appearing as she does during a time of greater parity of between women and men than in any other period in American history, demonstrates the continuing misogyny of the most popular American spy novelists. Ludlum tries to balance Bajaratt with the heroine, Cathy, who despite being an Air Force major, is a docile character and does less to demonstrate a range of women than to underscore a madonna/whore paradigm for all women. Tom Clancy's collection of female characters is no more progressive, and includes its own set of "dangerous women" including Elizabeth Elliot in *Clear and Present Danger*, a hysterical, nymphomaniac advisor/mistress to a senator, whom he "balances" with saintly, impossibly perfect Cathy Ryan. The continuing bifurcation of female types in spy novels may explain, in part, why so few women write, or read, American spy novels today.

Virginia Woolf, when asked to speak about women and fiction, mused:

The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean women and the fiction that they like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion. (3)

The history of women and spy fiction, although considerably more limited in scope than women and fiction, embodies many of the same conundrums of what exactly the phrase means, and what conclusions one can draw from its multiplexed meanings. Although the spy novel's reliance on military matters and national policy might suggest that few nineteenth-century women felt comfortable abandoning the domestic sphere to write such a public genre, the evidence suggests that of those few women who did attempt the genre, some succeeded quite well, and managed to merge the domestic with the public to illustrate the dialectical relationship between the two. Certainly their depictions of the interrelation of domestic and public informed male authors who would similarly merge the two spheres in the popular melodramatic novels which defined the genre long after the Civil War. Female spy characters expanded the possible roles for women in fiction, even if their appearance was highly qualified. Yet female spies also allowed male authors to play out their fantasies and their fears in the morally black and white realm of melodrama. The third element of Woolf's triumvirate, the female reader, is the most slippery for this study, yet the relative lack of spy fiction in ladies' magazines might provide clues to women's lack of interest in such stories, or it may reflect publishers' prejudices of what women's interests should be. The appearance of Ann Stephens's *Sir Henry's Ward* in a ladies' magazine, mediated as it is by a lack of military action, demonstrates how even a spy story could be translated into a woman-centered romance. Perhaps the secret of a gender's relationship to spy novels lies in how well the story caters to the gender's fantasies and self-identification. Although escapist popular culture tends to be conservative (even women's escapist fiction, as Tania Modleski has noted, tends to reinforce very conventional depictions of women's roles [24-26]), notions of what is "conservative" become more

progressive as society becomes so. Perhaps, as women in military and intelligence jobs seem less anomalous than part of the fabric of national political sphere, more women spy novelists and characters will emerge to present “feminine” perspectives to an overwhelmingly “masculine” genre.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

My study has only covered the very beginnings of the spy story in the United States, but it is a beginning few critics have recognized. By neglecting the earliest roots of the spy novel in the spy stories about the Revolution, critics have ignored the spy story's potential as a postcolonial story in addition to its more recognized role as an imperial story. Many of the differences that distinguish modern American spy stories from British ones can be traced back to the American spy story's origin as a merger of the historical romance and the military pageant play. Some critics have read these differences as proof of the inferiority of American spy thrillers, but such a reading presumes a British spy story model and does not account for the rich heritage of the American spy thriller, a heritage which reflects an idealized image of Jeffersonian agrarianism and Jacksonian individualism embodied in a populace dedicated to preserving the nation and the family against all enemies, foreign and domestic. But it is also a heritage which tries to grapple with the many paradoxes inherent in a nation of individuals who compose a democracy ruled by majority vote. The spy, a liminal figure moving between friend and foe, and truth and deception, seemed able to personify a hero who could transcend the class boundaries of the colonial government and demonstrate ingenuity and self-reliance, while supporting the goals of the greater army in the fight for independence.

The stars of the American thriller—the frontiersman, the confidence man, and the spy—all seem to personify American life at the margins and represent types of Jacksonian individuals. The subject of this study, the spy, uniquely represents an individual who could directly effect results in military campaigns, which are generally group efforts. From the military pageant, the spy novel not only depicts the nation's birth through war, but also celebrates the American volunteer defending the American homeland by protecting the national interests. The citizen-soldier lies at the heart of the American spy novel, appearing even today in the spies who serve the nation's defense whether through the military or one of the government agencies which comprise the national security community, eschewing the profits available in private industry, preferring instead to serve the public.

Yet even within the military model of the spy, the spy character proves to be a very flexible character who can reflect many concerns about America's evolution as a nation. Early on, Major André not only represented concerns about good men falling prey to promises of glory, but also symbolized England's impotence to thwarting American independence. As the victim of the male seduction tale of treason and espionage, André served a limited role in American literary history, but his pathetic tale gave America a victim to Benedict Arnold's treachery while presenting America as ultimately victorious, and also gave spy fiction its first sympathetic spy. Nathan Hale provided the genre a full-fledged, all-American hero, and one who could occupy tales concerned with not only America's colonial identity, but also its emerging national identity and the heroic potential of its citizens. That both characters were celebrated for being honest about their intent to conceal their identities only illustrates the spy story's embrace, and reliance on, paradox.

Ultimately paradox lies at the heart of the spy story. The celebration of a man acting covertly so the nation could enjoy an open democracy motivates the spy story far more than the existence of covert information. The American spy novel devotes very little attention to the information (or "intelligence") the spy seeks. The intelligence is like a Hitchcockian "McGuffin"; it serves to provide a plot motivation for continuing action. This lack of interest in the actual information may stem in part from André and Hale since neither were able to deliver the information they sought, and thus their celebrity rested on their attempts to spy rather than any contributions their information made to the war effort. Similarly, the American ambivalence about the information may also derive from the national needs the spy satisfied in American literature. Early optimism about "the American experiment" and hero worship of the founding fathers may have quieted any fears that the early government kept secrets from its citizens; yet the spy provided an individual focal point for celebrating the actions of courageous citizen-soldiers who risked their lives to secure the nation's independence.

At the same time, however, the spy could also express anxiety about the mutability of socioeconomic position in the new society, as Harvey Birch expresses James Fenimore Cooper's concerns. Harvey, a working-class peddler with an amazing ability to assume new identities, personifies Cooper's concerns about the fluidity of American society and illustrates Cooper's ambivalence about his enigmatic character

who willingly serves as an ignoble spy, yet demonstrates a greater selflessness to the American cause than Cooper's conventional heroes. Later spy novels would transform the spy into conventional heroes who protect the American homeland against those who would threaten American liberty, but the spy's contrary nature and socially transcendent potential often lurked beneath the new American hero. The common failure of well-born heroes to successfully spy, as in *Morton*, *The Rebel Spy*, *Horseshoe Robinson*, and *The Spy*, among others, illustrated both the noble hero's great integrity, and his unsuitability for the demands of a fluid society. Although Harvey's ingenuity and transformative ability condemns him to Cooper's ambivalence, those characteristics also uniquely make him fit for life in the evolving nation and its middle-class majority.

Still Cooper and other spy writers kept the spy confined to defensive military activity. Certainly the subject of the stories I have discussed, the Revolutionary War, was a war which both defined and defended the nation; yet its continued prominence in these novels, written throughout the nineteenth century, a period of America's emergence as an imperial power, demonstrates the national desire to see the many wars and aggressive foreign policy of the antebellum period as defensive actions taken against a world who would subjugate the United States. Indian Wars, the Mexican War, and the military actions to defend the Monroe Doctrine punctuate the United States' foreign and domestic policy prior to the Civil War. The same men, including J.H. Ingraham, Ned Buntline, and William Gilmore Simms, who wrote patriotic novels about heroic Revolutionary spies wrote patriotic novels about Mexican War spies, and portrayed the heroic spies of that war as family men who defended the honor and liberty of Americans, even if they had to travel to Mexico to do so.

Not all comments on American influence abroad were necessarily as supportive, and neither were all spy novels. Melville's *Israel Potter* not only questioned the heroic dimensions of America's heroic figures, but also the openness of American society. Melville's neglected novel stands as the first ironic American spy novel, questioning the heroic potential of not only the spies of fiction, but also the lowly historical spies whose memoirs had moldered while those of the American elite had become elevated to legend. Melville's retelling of Israel Potter's narrative not only reveals the false consciousness that maintains Israel's naïve

belief in the equality of American society, it also exposes the ruthless ambition and self-promotion that fueled the inclusion of Franklin, Jones, and Allen to the nation's pantheon of heroes. Melville's novel demonstrates not only the political flexibility of the spy novel genre, but also its potential to transcend the stock conventions of melodramatic novels and become a work of literary art.

American spy novels, lacking the postimperial cynicism of the later British spy novels and their complicated detective plots, have received little attention, even from popular culture critics, and as such, are rarely recognized as having a long history in American letters, when in fact they date back to the earliest historical romances and the early days of the American theatre. This limited study is only a first step to understanding the impact of the spy's impact on America's national literature and self-imaging. As such, the spy, as a daring individual who can travel freely throughout American society, becomes more important than spying and uncovering information. Although the civil war nature of the Revolution may seem to self-limit this study to the domestic character of the emerging character of the American spy, the fact that most American authors tended to ignore the international implications of the colonial war demonstrates their postcolonial concerns of what shape the government would take and how it would impact domestic policy. To more fully understand the international implications of the spy character, I would need to analyze the spy literature of the Mexican War; yet, as Robert Walter Johannsen notes in his extensive study of the popular culture springing from the Mexican War, the hero of those novels resembles the chivalric American hero who preserves America's democratic republic of the Revolutionary War novels and plays. Johannsen notes that the Americans, equating rebels with heroes, "saw themselves as rebels against a hostile and insensitive world" (109) which threatened the American democratic experiment.

Johannsen's study also notes the continued ambivalence of authors about the military. The militia epitomized the colonists' self-reliant patriotism in defending their homeland; yet the structure of the formal military chafed the freedom-loving volunteers who took presumed that the principle that "all men are created equal" eradicated all hierarchies in America. This military paradox lies at the heart of the earliest American spy novels. Authors felt that the Revolution symbolized the dramatic birth of the nation; yet few understood its military maneuvers, or even how the military in general worked. Without this understanding, they could

not confidently represent the military strategy behind a battle, or determine what information a spy could gather which would be of use to the army. Thus, they wrote novels about the war with few battles, featuring spies who provide no information. In female-authored novels, this military absence is most marked, but the male-authored novels also feature surprisingly little military action in stories set during a war.

Although fewer women wrote spy novels, and those who did feature less military activity, the differences between male and female-authored spy novels are less marked than the similarities, in particular the similar avoidance of the details of the spy's information. As such, these early spy novels are novels about people who spy, not spying itself. Spying exists as a reason for spies to use their wits to pass behind enemy lines unnoticed and to face great danger. The adventure, not the information, matters. Critics of later spy novels who suggest that American optimism in democracy rendered the political situation unsuitable for a thriving espionage literature are in part correct. These spy novels depict intrepid individuals combating the British army in battles of wits. Without war, the isolated position of the United States and the presumed openness of its democratic process obliterates any official need for secrets. Of the earliest spy storytellers, only Melville suggests that the American governmental elite might not be as honorable as history presumes; he is also the only one to show American governmental officials engaging in international diplomacy. But even he fails to mention what information Israel ferries between Franklin and Horne Tooke. Melville, demonstrating that Israel acted as a pawn, not a player, keeps the information hidden from both Israel and the reader.

Even the memoirs written by spies skip over the information gleaned. Crosby and Collins both discuss their missions, to some extent, as does DeBerniere, but in all cases, getting the information and facing the enemy and the threat of danger is much more exciting than the information itself. In those cases where the memoir may be more fiction than fact, as in Howe's and Potter's, the lack of information can be explained by the lack of fact. But even in the cases that are fairly factual, the adventure figures larger in the narrative than the mission.

It can be little wonder then that the fictional tales of spies focus on the risks taken by disguising their identity and boldly entering enemy territory, or that so many heighten the danger by having the intrepid spy

endure captivity and the threat of execution. Spies not only transform the conflict of armies into personal battles between individuals, they heighten the adventure potential by increasing the risk of execution. Through spy novels, the international conflict between the United States and Britain (and later, any country) can be transformed into a conflict between individuals, and Americans could be represented by some one who represented the majority of Americans as a middle-class hero, who possesses the intelligence, the daring, and the integrity that we all wish we had. These heroes provide us better selves leading more adventurous lives. It is little wonder that spy novels remain a popular genre and that literary critics have focussed increasing attention to the guilty pleasures of the spy novel. The only surprise is how long such thrilling adventures have been entertaining Americans.

Notes

¹ See in particular Ambler (1-22); Cox (xi-xix); Wark (4-8); Thompson (95) and Stone (ix-xiii).

² Certainly, as Noam Chomsky notes in a recent article in *Z Magazine* (April 1998), the very term "rogue state" is a loaded term which reveals an imperialist assessment by the United States' national security community of smaller nations who actively resist American policy and influence (Iraq, for example, is a "rogue state"). While I will not take up Chomsky's contention that the U.S. has acted equally "roguishly," it is worth noting that our national self-assessment of our international position as world leader or global policing force resembles nineteenth-century European assessment of "the white man's burden." What makes US international relationships less clear than "old fashioned" colonial relationships is the lack of an official governmental relationship between the US and other nations.

³ Since the French and Indian War (1754-63), the American colonies/United States have engaged in a major war approximately every thirty years (if not more often): the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the War of 1812 (1812-1815), the Mexican War (1846-1848), the Civil War (1861-1865); the Spanish American War (1898), World War I (1914-1918), World War II (1941-1945), the Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam (1961-1973), the Gulf War (1991). It was only after public outrage during the Vietnam war that the draft was eliminated, so the Gulf War was the first fought entirely by volunteers. After each war, the army was reduced to much smaller peacetime levels. See Cunliffe for information on post-Revolution, War of 1812, and Mexican American War reduction. Although the all-volunteer army has increasingly created a military apart from the civilian citizenry, constitutionally mandated civilian control continues to distinguish the American military as one of citizens protecting the nation.

⁴ Barlow's letter dated 2 Oct 1780 describes André: "With an appearance of philosophy and heroism, he observed that he was buoyed above the fear of death by a consciousness that every action of his life had been honorable" (35).

⁵ It is important to remember that West Point was the only position the Americans had on the Hudson. Had the British gained control of West Point, they would have gained control of the entire Hudson waterway, from Canada to New York City, thus effectively cutting New England off from the rest of the war. Although the British blundered several opportunities to decide the war in their favor, it is very likely that had the scheme been effected successfully, the British would have won, or the war would have continued considerably longer.

⁶ The following synopsis is compiled from Bakeless (261-2, 266-70, 281-93), Flexner (11-37), Miller (27-8, 31-6), Abbatt, and Decker.

⁷ Abbatt (73) notes that there are several versions of the statement, the above being the most commonly repeated one. Other versions range from the moderate "How hard is my fate" to the more peevish "I have borne everything with fortitude, but this is too degrading!"

⁸ Less kind twentieth-century historians have ascribed this action to a persnickety desire to avoid the blackened hands of the executioner who was in blackface.

⁹ Kenneth Silverman mentions that a still unpublished fragment (V, i) exists at the University of Virginia Library (380-381).

¹⁰ In either play, her appearance would be strictly ahistorical since Sneyd married Roger Edgeworth four years before André left for America, to the apparent disappointment of none but Seward. However, the "Monody" had a large cultural impact on the André myth. Arner mentions that Freneau was the first to of many to include a woman friend in André's life, but since Freneau's play was not published until 1963, it could have little bearing on other literature in the nineteenth century.

¹¹ Bland's rejection of the cockade caused a minor riot in the theater on the first night of performance, an incident which caused Dunlap to rewrite the scene.

¹² Michel Foucault comments on the special place of the confession in the justice system: "To a certain extent it [the confession] transcended all other evidence; an element in the calculation of the truth, it was also the act by which the accused accepted the charge and recognized its truth; it transformed an investigation carried out without him into a voluntary affirmation" (38).

¹³ My understanding of the spectrum of male homosocial desire comes from my reading of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men* and her *Epistemology of the Closet*. Paul Fussell, in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, especially chapter 8, discusses the literary legacy of homoerotic attractions of British soldiers during WWI, which he traces back to Whitman's Civil War poetry. Some of that language suggests the language used to describe André.

¹⁴ The line between illegal orders and distasteful ones is fuzzy in these representations, yet there are significant ramifications for the military members who must distinguish them, one area which the literature rarely explores. The Unified Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), the legal code for the modern American military, is explicit regarding the obligation of military members to disregard illegal orders, yet they must obey legal orders. The legal status of spying, as debated by civilian writers even now, poses something of a conundrum primarily because they apply civilian laws to military action. Much of that debated as questionably legal by these civilian authors have clear legal definitions in martial law.

¹⁵ Although I've found nothing in the Melville literature about André as a possible source for Billy Budd, the similarities between the "Handsome Sailor" and André, whose physical beauty was commented on by many who knew him, seem quite striking, especially as moral dilemmas for the men called to judge them in capital offenses.

¹⁶ Philbrick (98, n4) notes that the standards for dramatic success in Dunlap's time were different from today's standards. If a play ran nine nights it was a hit, even if the performances were not consecutive. But, by either standard, Dunlap's play was a failure.

¹⁷ Almost everyone writing on American theatrical history has an opinion: Walter Meserve (*Emerging Entertainment* 108) suggests that the play was too close to the historical incident; Richard Moody ("Introduction to *The Glory of Columbia: Her Yeomanry*" 90) posits "the absence of simple and direct theatrical 'flag waving' undoubtedly contributed markedly to the public lethargy"; and Oral Sumner Coad (*The American Stage* 288) when noting the failure of Clyde Fitch's *Major André* (1903), suggests that despite the hold André had on playwrights, "the appeal of the André theme to American audiences seemingly is not irresistible."

¹⁸ See Tracy C. Davis on the box office power of female cross dressing from 1670 through the nineteenth century (112-113).

¹⁹ Apparently reasserting the masculinity of the military, and women's unsuitability for that sphere, was not a box office risk. One wonders, though, why Dunlap and others who followed seemed to dwell on it. Mary

Wolstoncraft's 1792 *The Vindication of Women* may explain the hypersensitivity. Another reason might be *The Female Review*, or the *Life of Deborah Sampson* by Herman Mann (1797) which describes the adventures of Deborah Sampson Gannett who enlisted in the Continental Army in 1782 and served until she was discovered as a woman when receiving treatment for a wound. Certainly a number of women traveled with the army, both wives and not, doing any number of tasks from cooking to nursing, to scout work behind the line. They were enough of a presence that Washington routinely ordered that women not march with the men when the army marched through town (orders reproduced in Saffell 335, and 362). As Norton (155-194) notes, women were gaining more political voice and attention after the war, which may have caused a backlash affect, but one that apparently reigned for a while. Mordecai M. Noah discussed the topic of women in the army in similar mocking fashion in his play *She Would Be a Soldier* in 1819.

²⁰ See Walter J. Meserve (*Heralds of Promise* 151). Apparently Breck's play was never produced although Meserve notes it is "no less stage worthy than other plays" and Graff observes that the printed version of the play suggests some form of production (114). Graff (194-199) also mentions the Reverend Leo Haid's *Major John André* published in 1874 as a "school play."

²¹ This statement could yield interesting results when examined with Sedgwick's theories about male homosocial desire. Certainly many of the accounts, such as Hamilton's, suggest an intense male bonding, as well as a subtle feminization of André, lingering on his looks, as well as his "insinuating manner." Tallmadge declares in his *Memoir* "I became so deeply attached to Major André, that I can remember no instance where my affections were so fully absorbed in one man" (38). Also interesting is the insistence of André as "manly" which may be simply typical eighteenth and nineteenth century praise for admirable men. The issue is even more complicated for twentieth-century critics faced with evidence that André may have been gay (see Decker 37 and Flexner 142). The only early account to discuss André's relationship with John Cope, an eleven year old art student André had taken on while in Pennsylvania, Winthrop Sargent's biography of André reproduces the letters André sent Mr. Cope, John's father, with little comment, other than to note that young John was quite affected by André's execution. Sargent also assures us that despite poems written to young Philadelphia lovelies, "there is no evidence that his heart was bound by new ties while in this country" (151). Some twentieth-century authors have depicted André as exaggeratedly effeminate as a result of the slender historical evidence that he may have been gay, generally relying on strident homophobic stereotypes of effeminate gay men for their characterizations. Bruce Lancaster (246) suggests that André was so "foppish" that one would have expected him to crumble under any serious questioning. Richard Nelson's play *The General from America* (performed during the Barbicon's Spring 1997 season) depicts André as a simpering, prancing boy toy to Sir Henry Clinton, an extreme depiction to say the least. Nelson's play purports to recuperate Arnold's reputation, but it is a task few could achieve without rewriting history.

²² To be fair, Cooper did not praise André. He questioned André's supposedly excellent judgment since he was caught, and he does not excuse André from becoming a spy as Dunlap does. Although Cooper concedes that there are circumstances which could make spying an honorable activity, he does not identify André's as fitting those conditions.

²³ Nathaniel Parker Willis. "André's Request to Washington."

<p>It is not the fear of death That damps my brow, It is not for another breath I ask thee now; I can die with a lip unstirr'd And with a quiet heart— Let but this prayer be heard Ere I depart.</p>	<p>I can give up my mother's look— My sister's kiss; I can think of love—yet brook A death like this! I can give up the young fame I burn'd to win— All—but the spotless name I glory in.</p>	<p>Thine is the power to give, Thine to deny, Joy for the hour I live— Calmness to die. By all the brave should cherish By my dying breath, I ask that I may perish By a soldier's death.</p>
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²⁴ The poem apparently inspired a ballad. "Major André," describes André's last thoughts of his beloved "Delia."

²⁵ See Levine for a discussion of the move toward a separation of culture in the nineteenth-century in America, in particular the theatre. See also John D. Reardon (6) for a discussion of the linkage between "serious" subjects and verse.

²⁶ Dwight was a tutor at Yale while Hale attended. Two pages into the poem, which, other than the following passage, relates the Biblical story of the conquest of Canaan obliquely to the Revolution, he makes his only overt reference to the American Revolution:

<p>Thus while fond Virtue wished in vain to save, Hale, bright and generous, found a hapless grave. With genius' living flame his bosom glow'd, And science charm'd him to her suit abode: In worth's fair path his feet adventur'd far; The pride of peace, the rising grace of war; In duty firm, in danger calm as even, To friends unchanging, and sincere to heaven. How short his course, the prize how early won!</p>	<p>While weeping friendship mourns her favorite gone. With soul too noble for so base a cause, Thus André bow'd to war's barbarian laws. In morn's fair light the opening blossom warm'd, Fierce roar'd th' untimely blast around its head; The beauty vanish'd, and the fragrance fled' Soon sunk his graces in the wintry tomb, And sad Columbia wept his hapless doom.</p>
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²⁷ My version derives from several printed sources, notably Adams, Bakeless (110-122), and Miller (18-21).

²⁸ The novel went through at least forty editions in English by 1860, three in French, two in German, and one in Spanish by the same date. It was adapted for the stage in 1822 by Charles Powell Clinch, proving a success on stage as well.

²⁹ Cooper begins his novel by noting "Great numbers, however, wore masks, which even to this day have not been thrown aside; and many an individual has gone down to the tomb, stigmatized as a foe to the rights of his countrymen while, in secret, he has been the useful agent of the leaders of the Revolution" (36).

³⁰ Buell ("Postcolonial" 421-2) argues that Cooper did not achieve his postcolonial break from Scott until *The Pioneers* which he bases on the creation of Natty Bumppo as a much more interesting character than Judge Temple or Oliver Effingham, but I would counter that many of the same qualities that make Natty compelling are also present in Birch, as evidenced in the British reviews that found Birch the only wholly original aspect of the novel. Certainly Cooper's emergence as a postcolonial writer, from his position as a writer colonized by English tastes was a long process, as the long love/hate relationship he had with Scott, chronicled in Kelly (38-42), indicates. Kelly also dismisses *The Spy* as insignificant in the Cooper oeuvre of historical fiction, largely because it is not a Leatherstocking tale and does not explicitly address Indians.

³¹ My understanding of the metaphorical discussion of the Revolution as family rebellion, comes from many sources, in particular Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims* and Samuels, *Romances of the Republic*.

³² Slotkin focuses his discussion of violence in Cooper's novels on the Leatherstocking Tales. However, many of the points he makes regarding violence as right of passage apply not only to *The Spy* but also to the genre of "spy stories."

³³ Cooper features Virginians in contradistinction to the New England mercantile-based or professional founding fathers. There is no historical reason for making the American troops the Virginia Horse; many of the principal players in the crisis at West Point (only a few weeks prior to the action of the story) were in fact from Connecticut, including Arnold and Tallmadge. However, Cooper's importation of the Virginia horse to the neutral ground makes clear his ideal natural aristocracy as one that is agrarian, rather than industrial or urban. Some critics have argued that the importation of the Virginia horse demonstrates Cooper's vision of a unified nation as Virginians and New Yorkers fight side by side, except the only New Yorker soldier fights for the British against the Virginians.

³⁴ Colonel Tallmadge's testimony is that of a regular Continental officer, and may indeed be particularly biased against the militia soldiers, but, as a propertied Federalist, he reflects the view that would be most in line with Cooper's. Although the publication date of the memoir indicates that Cooper would have not read it prior to writing *The Spy*, he would have been aware of Tallmadge's testimony at the hearing on John Paulding's claim for additional pension in 1817 which expresses similar distrust of the irregulars and was reprinted in many newspapers of the day, including *The Niles' Weekly Review*, as well as in Benson.

³⁵ Barent Gardenier took Tallmadge to task for calling the captors "cow-boys" in the pro-British sense of the term, but Tallmadge's description that they were "of that class of people who passed between both armies" (Benson 11) indicates that he saw no distinction between the roaming irregulars. Wayne Franklin, in his introduction to *The Spy* (xviii), notes that Cooper's meetings with John Jay probably occurred during the summer of 1817, when Tallmadge's feud with Paulding was well publicized.

³⁶ Cooper's preference for the Cowboys over the Skinners may stem from his connection to the De Lancy family (his in-laws). Colonel James De Lancy commanded the Cowboys during the war.

³⁷ Verhoeven suggests that Lawton dies as a yet another Cooperian sacrifice to class concerns (85), but there is nothing to suggest that Lawton is not of exactly the same social standing as Dunwoodie.

³⁸ The most persuasive arguments for a standing army were essays in *The Federalist Papers* written by Alexander Hamilton. See in particular "Federalist Numbers 24-29."

³⁹ Michael Kammen (33-58) notes the increasing reluctance, beginning in the 1820s, to identify the Revolution as a particularly revolutionary act.

⁴⁰ H.L. Barnum transcribed (and polished) Enoch Crosby's tale, publishing it as *The Spy Unmasked*, capitalizing on the popularity of Cooper's novel. Although Cooper disavowed the work, and said that he had never met Crosby, James H. Pickering agrees that Crosby was probably the spy Jay described, even though Cooper never met him.

⁴¹ Crawford ("Images" 64) notes that "Weems glosses over Washington's own deceit regarding the letters directed to Greene but intended for Cornwallis: 'He artfully wrote letters to Greene, informing him, that, "in

order to relieve Virginia, he was determined immediately to attack New York." These letters were so disposed to fall into the right hands."

⁴² There were other literary spies (aside from Hale and André) before this, but they were typically military officers disguised as civilians, as in William Loom's play *The Battle of Eutaw Springs* (1817) in which Captain Lawrence Manning (an Irish American) disguises as an Irish peasant type in the British camp.

⁴³ Hugh Henry Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry* provides an example of the effects of masquerade in the reverse, usually to ridicule those who are duped by Teague's masquerade as a politician (38), a philosopher (47), and Indian (72), or Cuff's, a black man's, masquerade as a philosopher (130-1). The humor lies in the inability of Teague or Cuff to adequately satisfy the minimum requirements for these professions (and in Teague's case, ethnicity) thus their assumptions of these roles remain transparent to the aware reading audience. Brackenridge's focus is the dimwitted audience of the novel, not the mutability of the inferior classes. Teague as Indian also rests on the assumption of type—Irish brogues (and any other Celtic accent) and Indian languages are equally unintelligible to the standard English trained ear.

⁴⁴ Harvey is often cited as incredibly patriotic, a characterization that holds only if one identifies Washington as America. Although Harvey does not disparage America, he shows no great devotion to the stated principles of American liberty, nor particular enmity to the royal cause. He does regret that he cannot reveal himself to men he apparently admires, like Lawton, but it's difficult to read patriotic kinship in this regret. Only his death on the battlefield of the War of 1812 helping the Americans suggests that his patriotism extends beyond his reverence for Washington.

⁴⁵ See Watson ("Simms and the Civil War" 76-89) for a discussion of how Simms used the American Revolution as a parallel for Southern action in the years leading up to the Civil War. Watson contends that Simms used the Revolution as a secessionist analogy only after 1850, but the anti-Federalist, and strongly regionalist flavor of the earlier *The Partisan* resembles many of the techniques Watson describes. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 was only one of a long series of conflicts leading up to the Civil War, many before 1850.

⁴⁶ Material written for publication by employees of United States governmental agencies (especially those with access to classified material) is subject to review. For example, G.J.A. O'Toole, in his "Note On Sources," provides the standard disclaimer that the book had been reviewed by the CIA and that he cites no classified material. Even so, this review apparently does not prevent people from publishing memoirs about their work for intelligence agencies. A quick survey of books in the Library of Congress under the subject "Intelligence Officers—United States—Biography" discovered thirty-seven autobiographies of former intelligence officers. This number does not include memoirs written on more specific aspects of intelligence collection, such as cryptography in World War II. Although, as Robin Dennison notes in his discussion of the difficulties Gordon Welchman encountered when publishing his history of the Enigma-code breaking operation during World War II, a major breakthrough for communications intelligence (COMINT) collection, official agencies can exert some pressure over would-be authors. Still, Welchman's memoir, *The Hut Six Story: Breaking the Enigma Codes* (New York: McGraw Hill 1982), was published.

⁴⁷ Given my later arguments that Howe's narrative is in fact fiction, one might assume that Kaplan excluded it on that basis. Kaplan does, however, include some narratives whose authenticity he questions, and Howe's story has not widely been identified as fiction or "creative" literature. It does not, for example, appear in Lyle Wright's *Bibliography of Early American Literature*.

⁴⁸ Even Congress apparently considered the number to be negligible. When discussing a bill regarding land bounties for all veterans, their discussions center on the number of veterans of the War of 1812, and even

then, they presume that no more than eighty per cent of that number would apply. *Niles' Weekly Register* 13:17(December 20, 1817): 270.

⁴⁹ When Bancroft's grandson, a general in the British army, learned of the discovery, he was so horrified at his grandfather's perfidy that he destroyed the bulk of Bancroft's papers.

⁵⁰ As in Harvey Birch's disguises, the ploy requires the willingness of the guard to believe stereotypical depictions of the Native Americans.

⁵¹ For historical discussion of DeBerniere and Brown's mission, see Bakeless, 37-54, French *Day* 11 and 44-6.

⁵² Williams's analysis has informed much of my own reading of the narrative. Howe's narrative has not been universally acknowledged as a literary hoax, although Williams's analysis of the comparisons between Howe's narrative and DeBerniere's is quite convincing. John Bakeless, who apparently read both DeBerniere's text and Howe's, describes them as two separate spies during the revolution, taking the Howe narrative at face value.

⁵³ Unlike DeBerniere with his map, Howe leaves no legacy of intelligence records. Although French lists his narrative in the bibliography of *The Day of Concord and Lexington*, he does not apparently draw from it, dismissing it as "Not a journal but a narrative, of no historical value" (282). O'Toole also cites Howe as an authority, noting that although his exploits are not documented elsewhere, he determines that "the modesty of his claims lend much credence to his memoir" (307).

⁵⁴ Surveying in a well settled area like Eastern Massachusetts would have seemed less necessary than the production of food and guns, in both 1775 and 1827. In 1775, especially, the lack of obvious necessity for surveying during the war might have led the people to assume that DeBerniere and Brown were doing exactly what they were—gathering information for a future attack. Washington's occupation as a surveyor also linked the job to military expeditions.

⁵⁵ The fact that "Howe" uses Smith, as well as Major Pitcairn as the only officers named, in addition to General Gage lends further credence to the fictional nature of the story, since both figure prominently in DeBerniere's account of the Battle of Lexington that immediately followed the journal in the original printing.

⁵⁶ There is record of at least one Private Jacob Howe (17, 81, 99), a drummer named Jesse Howe (16), an Ensign William How (45) and a Sergeant James Howe (94), but no John.

⁵⁷ Williams (274) notes that the focus on racial difference is much more pronounced, and derogatory, in Howe's narrative than in DeBerniere's. While DeBerniere's narrative identifies class differences (noticeable to a British officer in the less wealthy American colonies), Howe mutes class differences as he communicates (and tricks) with all economic classes. However, he focuses on racial differences, injecting considerably more African-Americans, primarily to depict them as gullible to his trickery.

⁵⁸ For example, Watson ends his account of his eight years of service with a tabulation of his injuries: "I was five times wounded, was struck down by the explosion of a piece of artillery, at the battle of Long Island, and had a number of bones crushed by a desperate fall when on duty....I further state that my constitution is so far debilitated, that nothing but the most powerful astringents have enabled me to be comfortable or to do any labor for several years, and that unavoidable misfortunes have reduced me to a state of indigence" (522).

⁵⁹ Little is known about H.L. Barnum, but he did run a magazine and publish assorted books. (Pickering, Xva-XXIIIa). Pickering reproduces in Crosby's 1832 pension deposition in "Enoch Crosby." The deposition provides a nice point of contrast between Barnum's embellishment of the story and the hyper condensed legal form. Neither, however, actually records Crosby's words.

⁶⁰ The deposition recalls that during the interview the Committee of Safety said that he could be of "more use to his country" by performing similar missions, yet neither the word "spy" nor the resulting moral dilemma are recorded.

⁶¹ Sheila Post-Lauria (132) explains the apparent destructive editorial practice of *Putnam's* criticism of a book they had just published in serial form as a result of the magazine's changing editor and management in the spring, 1855, just before the serial was completed.

⁶² Dupuy's novel, which is almost identical to the anonymous *Morton*, substituting the name "Ashleigh" for "Morton" and other cosmetic changes, should not even be counted as an additional work. Although a few sources identify Dupuy as the author of *Morton*, the identification is uncertain. I will refer primarily to *Morton* and its anonymous author, and discuss *Ashleigh* only when it diverges from *Morton*.

⁶³ See, for example, Harriet Hyman Alonso's book which documents peace movements as women's movements from the 1820s to the present day.

⁶⁴ See also Coffman (104-136) on the increasing separation of women, as wives and daughters, from the army during the period 1815-1860.

⁶⁵ See Halttunen (75-91) for a discussion on the sentimental fashion of the 1840s.

⁶⁶ See McCafferty (43-45) for a history of the evolution of captivity narratives into early pulp fiction. Ann S. Stephens's *Mary Derwent* anticipates many of the narratives she identifies in the 1980s "Savage Series."

⁶⁷ Ann S. Stephens also makes a passing negative comment toward the government as her narrator notes "Then, as now, Congress was slow to act, while the enemy was prompt and terrible" (*Mary Derwent* 289).

⁶⁸ My own hometown of Guilford, CT, accounts for the town's lack of direct involvement in the war (and disproportionately large number of remaining colonial houses) to Agnes Dickenson Lee's fearless firing at a few lost British soldiers who found themselves in Guilford after crossing the Long Island Sound. Although they were not killed, they were frightened enough to leave town and not return. That Guilford, as a small agricultural community, had no strategic value to the British does not diminish the legend in local minds.

⁶⁹ Both women are mentioned in Thacher's *Military Journal* (169). Holly Mayer (29n) suggests that Molly Pitcher may be more legend than fact.

⁷⁰ If one considers gender in Lacanian terms, as women "masquerading" to cover a lack, a woman masquerading as a man would present the same challenges as a boy Shakespearean actor in *As You Like It* playing Rosalind playing Ganymed. On one level, the temptation would be to play the role as a boy playing a boy, but that would eliminate the subtleties of communicating to the audience that the boy, Ganymed, is really the girl, Rosalind, which is far more important to the progress of the play than the character Ganymed, subtleties which might be impossible for a female actor to communicate, not knowing male signals for communicating that they are playing women playing men. In this case one could think of the female authors as boys playing Rosalind playing Ganymed. On the other hand, for the male authors who may see femininity

as a masquerade covering a lack of the phallus, women masquerading as men might be simply people dropping the masquerade (the boy playing Ganymed as boy without the mediating Rosalind) and replacing the phallus with a shotgun. Of course, as Judith Butler (46-54) notes in her discussion of femininity as masquerade, the initial assumption raises more questions than it answers, but it provides an interesting point to ponder in the very different approaches to cross-dressing women by men and women.

⁷¹ Political conversions motivated by love differ from the reflection of the political convictions of their lovers that the Wharton women demonstrate. Although Frances's Whiggism seems more true than Sarah's parroting of Wellmere, both women are said to repeat only what their lovers have told them. In contrast, Isabella's political conversion comes at dinner at Sir Henry Clinton's as she hears Eliot Lee speak and "for the first time an American feeling shot athwart her mind" (1: 206).

⁷² Barker's text is an extreme case of a novel dashed off with little regard to historical accuracy, but it does indicate a trend toward growing freedom with respect to historical events, and a cavalier attitude regarding the conflation of historical fact and blatant fabrication.

⁷³ Suggestions of lesbianism underlie many depictions of women who do not satisfy the "conventional" norm of female patriotism, and become stronger in twentieth century spy novels, particularly in American novels which place so much emphasis on the melodramatic hero who is either a family man or a family man in the making. In a British novel, like Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger*, in which lesbianism serves as a way to titillate his readers and/or to demonstrate the hero's sexual prowess, Pussy Galore is a lesbian whom James Bond manages to convert (he is *that* macho). In Tom Clancy novels, dependent as they are on conventional and passive heroines, lesbians present a threat to the state and the family; the villain of Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising* is a lesbian lab director who preys on the earnest Air Force (male) officer hero's brilliant but passive, (civilian) scientist girlfriend. (Clancy tends to forget that the armed services have been fully gender integrated since 1976.)

⁷⁴ In discussing the "masculine" histories of George Bancroft, Jared Sparks, Francis Parkman and others, Douglas suggests that their "masculinity" of history derives from the military, rather than political, nature of their histories which are thus a study of violence (176). I would counter that one cannot entirely separate the political from the military and that both, occurring as they do in the political sphere, are equally "masculine" in that they remove the concerns of the nation from the "domestic" sphere. Military action provides better opportunity for overt expressions of courage as the actors directly face life threatening challenges, rather than challenges to political power or personal reputation, just as spying features the individual risking his (or her) life without the support structure of fellow soldiers in military action. Melodramatic spy novels lack much of the really graphic (and much of it gratuitous) violence of novels not only by Simms, Cooper, and Kennedy, but also by Sedgwick, Stephens, and Morton's author. This lack may result from the authors' attempt to cater to a different audience: possibly more women, but equally possibly the children (particularly boys) who read dime westerns, or it may result from a desire to have a happier ending with fewer disturbing situations.

⁷⁵ Susan Faludi (xx) writing about the backlash of the 1980s, notes that "the antifeminist backlash has been set off not by women's achievement of full equality but by the increased possibility that they might win it."

⁷⁶ See Flexner (259, 275-77, 360-74) on Peggy's involvement in Arnold's treason.

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